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EZRA, NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER

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EZRA, NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER

The Edinburgh Geographical Institute

N.B.—Some of the identifications

T.C. & E.C. Jack

map are uncertain, compare notes.

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The Century Bible

General Editor:
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Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
MAPS AND INDEX

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CONTENTS

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

PAGE

A. Introduction to Ezra and Nehemiah :
I. Name, Place in the Canon 3
II. Contents 4
III. The Book of the *Torah* read by Ezra . . . 8
IV. Principal Sources 11
V. Date 18
VI. Recent Discussions 21
VII. Contemporary Literature 30
VIII. Comparative Dates, Jewish, &c. 32
Abbreviations, Literature used, &c. 35
B. Ezra, Text of the Revised Version with Annotations 39
C. Nehemiah, Text of the Revised Version with Annotations 159

ESTHER

A. Introduction :
I. Name of Book 291
II. Place in the Canon 291
Apocryphal Additions 294
III. Abstract of Contents 295
IV. Aim and Character of the Book 296
V. Unity and Integrity 298
VI. Date and Authorship 299
VII. The Feast Purim and the Word 'Pur' . . . 301
Literature 305
B. Text of the Revised Version with Annotations . 306
C. Additional Notes :
1. Was Cyrus a Zoroastrian? 360
2. Were the early Persian Kings tolerant? . . 362
3. Note to Ezra VIII. 21 363
4. Note to Esther II. 12–15 363
INDEX 365

MAPS AND PLAN

1. Map of Ancient World . . . *facing title-page*
2. Map of Province of Judah, &c. . . „ p. 39
3. Plan of Jerusalem . . . . „ p. 159

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

INTRODUCTION

I. Name, Place in Canon.

Ezra and Nehemiah are treated as one book with the name 'Ezra' in the Talmud[1], the Massorah, in the LXX (B) (Esdras (B)), in Josephus[2], and in the early Christian Church. Origen in his Hexapla was the first to divide this one work into two, but the first to give the second part the name 'Nehemiah' was Jerome, according to Sayce[3] and Ryle, though Baudissin[4] says it is due to late MSS. of the LXX.

In the Jewish Canon, as represented by our Hebrew Bible, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles (reckoned as one book) are the two last books in the third division (*Ketubim* or writings, also called *Hagiographa*), and therefore in the Hebrew Old Testament. In the English, Welsh, &c., Bible, Ezra and Nehemiah, counted as two books, appear after Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, and before Esther. It is impossible to say for certain when Ezra-Nehemiah was received into the Canon of the Old Testament. Ryle[5] thinks that every book now in the *Ketubim* must have found its way into the Jewish Canon between 160–109 B. C. His evidence for this conclusion is cumulative, but it is by no means decisive. He does not advance a single argument that settles the matter beyond controversy, nor can the sum total of his arguments be said to do this. It cannot be proved definitely that our Hebrew Bible was recognized as canonical by the Synod of Jamnia (A. D. 90). By about A. D. 200 the whole of the Hebrew Bible as we know it must have been recognized as canoni-

[1] *Baba Bathra*, 15[A].
[2] *Contra Ap.* i. 8, &c.
[3] *Ezra and Nehemiah*, p. 28.
[4] *Einleitung*, p. 264.
[5] *The Canon of the Old Testament*[(2)], 129 ff.

cal, for the Mishnah implies that, and we seem justified in believing that in A. D. 200 the Mishnah existed complete, though no documentary witness certifies to the existence of a written Mishnah until some centuries later.

Though it is the prevailing opinion among modern scholars, especially since the time of Zunz [1], that originally Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah formed but one continuous book, compiled, and in part composed, by one man, named the Chronicler, or by more than one belonging to the same school, there is not an atom of evidence in ancient Codices, Versions, or Editions, that these three books were counted as one, though there is ample evidence that Ezra-Nehemiah was reckoned as one. See further under 'Sources,' &c., pp. 12 ff. The duplication of Ezra i. 1–3[a] at the close of 2 Chronicles is due to a late editor who wished to explain when and how the seventy years of the preceding verse came to an end.

II. The Contents of Ezra-Nehemiah.

The following analysis rests on the general assumption that the present order of the chapters and verses in Ezra-Nehemiah is in the main at once genuine and authentic, though in some of its details the text has suffered at the hands of copyists and editors.

Ezra.

The book of Ezra falls naturally into two main divisions. Chaps. i–vi speak of the period from the arrival at Jerusalem of Zerubbabel and Joshua and their fellow exiles to the completion and dedication of the Temple, i. e. from 537 to 516. In chaps. vii–x we have a record of the arrival from Babylon of Ezra and his caravan, and of the work which Ezra did, all comprehended in something over a single year (458–457 B. C.). Of the sixty or fifty years that elapsed between the events of chaps. vi and vii we know practically nothing, though some records of this interval must at one time have existed, perhaps incorporated in the original draft of Ezra-Nehemiah.

[1] *Gottes Vorträge* (2), 28 ff.

i–vi. *First part of Ezra: from the return to the dedication of the Temple*, 537–516 B. C.

i. Cyrus, having conquered Babylon, permits the Jewish exiles in that country to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their Temple and reorganize their religious institutions, restoring to them the Temple vessels removed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B. C.

ii (1 Esdras v. 7–45). A list of those who accepted the royal offer, over 40,000 in all.

iii (1 Esdras v. 47–65). Resumption of the religious life of the nation: building and dedication of the Altar (1–3); observance of Tabernacles and other feasts (4–7); foundation of the Temple laid (8–13), 537–6 B. C.

iv. 1–5, 24 (1 Esdras v. 66–73). The Jews refuse the offer of the Samaritans to co-operate with them in the work of rebuilding the Temple, whereupon the Samaritans steadfastly oppose the work, which therefore remained at a standstill from 536 to 516 (twenty years).

The section iv. 7–23 (1 Esdras ii. 15–25) (ver. 6 is an interpolation, see note on) belongs to the history of the building of the walls, and has its right place between Ezra i and Neh. i, or (Torrey, Kent) after Neh. vi.

v. 1 f (1 Esdras vi. 1 f). The building of the Temple resumed through the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (520 B. C.).

v. 3–vi. 12 (1 Esdras vi. 3–34). Unsuccessful opposition of the Persian officials to the building (520–15 B. C.).

v. 3–5. The Persian officials make inquiries of the builders.

v. 6–vi. 12. Correspondence between them and King Darius resulting in a royal decree authorizing the Jews to proceed with the building.

vi. 12–18 (1 Esdras vii. 1–11). Completion and dedication of the Temple (516 B. C.).

vi. 19–22 (1 Esdras vii. 12–15). The keeping of the Passover.

Second part of Ezra; vii–x (1 Esdras viii–ix. 36): *Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem and his work.*

To these chapters must be added Neh. vii. 73b–x. 39, which describe the activity of Ezra and are silent about Nehemiah, though his name has by mistake found its way into Nehemiah (458–457 (or 456, or 455) B. C.).

Between the time implied at the end of ch. vi and the beginning of ch. vii there is an interval of about sixty years, about which the Old Testament is almost, if not quite, silent. Nor do the recently found Aramaic papyri throw any light on this period, as they belong to a somewhat later date.

vii (1 Esdras viii. 1–27). Journey of Ezra and his party from Babylon to Jerusalem, bringing from Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) a commission authorizing the reorganization of Judaism.

viii. 1–14 (1 Esdras viii. 28–40). List of those who return.

viii. 15–36 (1 Esdras viii. 41–64 (66)). The assembling of the party by the river Ahava; incidents of the journey; the arrival.

ix (1 Esdras viii. 68–90). Ezra's grief on hearing that some Jews were married to foreign wives (1–5); his confession and prayer (6–15).

x (1 Esdras viii. 91–ix. 36). Measures taken to put an end to the mixed marriages.

See also the analysis of Neh. viii. 73b–x in its place under Nehemiah, though this section belongs strictly to the life of Ezra and, therefore, to the book so called.

The history of Ezra breaks off suddenly and of his end we have no certain information: see p. 155 ff.

NEHEMIAH.

In this book we have a narrative of Nehemiah's life from the time he received the king's permission to visit his people at Jerusalem (i) to his second visit (xiii).

In i–vii. 5, with which must probably go vii. 6–73a, we have what have been called Nehemiah's memoirs, called

by the Germans the 'I' sections, as Nehemiah in them speaks in the first person.

vii. 73^{b}–x (see on) forms part of the history of Ezra, and probably stood originally at the end of the Book of Ezra, forming part of that book.

i. 1–11^{ab}. Nehemiah's grief on hearing of the sad condition of Jerusalem, and his prayer.

i. 11^{c}–ii. Nehemiah, receiving the king's permission, visits Jerusalem: his inspection of the walls and his pathetic impressions.

iii. Names of those who repaired the several parts of the walls.

iv. Opposition to the work (1–8), and the means employed by Nehemiah to overcome it (9–23).

v. Social distress through the hard treatment of the poor by the rich (1–5) and how Nehemiah remedied it (6–13). Nehemiah's own generosity (14–19).

vi. The walls completed (ver. 15), notwithstanding opposition from without (1–9) and treachery within (10–19).

vii. 1–73^{a} + xi. 1 f. and probably, in addition, the rest of ch. xi. Measures taken for the defence of Jerusalem (vii. 1–3) and for the increase of its population (vii. 4–xi. 1 ff.).

vii. 73^{b}–x (less certainly x) belongs to the history of Ezra, and has its proper place immediately after Ezra x as a part of that book: see p. 155 ff. and introductory remarks to vii. 73^{b}. Ezra reads and expounds the law (vii. 73^{b}–viii. 8); commands the people to rejoice (viii. 9–11); Tabernacles observed (viii. 12–18); confession and prayer (ix. 1–37); signatures to the covenant made (ix. 38–x. 29); obligations assumed by the people (x. 10–39).

xi. 1 ff. Continuation of the history of Nehemiah.

xi. 1 f. How the population of Jerusalem is increased.

xi. 3–xii. 26. Various lists of laymen and Temple officials.

xii. 27–43. Dedication of the walls. Here the first person, dropped after vii. 5, is resumed (see verses 31, 38, 40).

xii. 44–xiii. 31^{*} (end). Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem (xiii. 6): his later religious reforms: provision is

made for the support of the Levites (xii. 44–47 + xiii. 10–14) and for the strict observance of the Sabbath (xiii. 15–22); energetic protest against mixed marriages (viii. 23–29); Nehemiah's closing words (viii. 30 f.).

III. The Book of the Torah, or the Instruction Book Brought, Read, and Expounded by Ezra.

Before proceeding to a consideration of the sources on which Ezra-Nehemiah rests it will be of some service to consider briefly the nature and extent of the Law Book brought by Ezra (see Ezra vii. 14).

No one now believes that the whole of our present Hebrew Old Testament was brought together and recognized as canonical by Ezra and Nehemiah, helped by the (fictitious) Great Synagogue (see on Neh. viii. 2), and perhaps by Malachi, though it was the prevailing opinion among Jew and Christian in ancient times, and in recent times was vigorously defended by Keil and Hengstenberg in Germany, and by Archibald Alexander and W. H. Green, both of Princeton, U.S.A. It is now agreed among all scholars that many parts of the Old Testament were not even written for some centuries after the above period.

It used to be largely held that Ezra, or one of his predecessors, was the editor of the Hexateuch (Pentateuch and Joshua), and that it was a copy of this which Ezra read. But Ezra shows little or no interest in the earlier, the so-called prophetic parts of the Hexateuch, or any acquaintance with them. It is to the legal portions that Ezra and Nehemiah hark back, especially to the laws in Deut. (**D**) and Lev. xvii. 17–26 (**H**). The use of the word *torah*, translated 'law,' proves nothing in the present discussion, for though in Rabbinical Hebrew it is the technical term for the Pentateuch, it never has that sense in the Old Testament, as Delitzsch in the last edition of his *Commentary on Genesis* (1887) admitted, after having previously maintained the contrary. The word denotes

strictly 'instruction,'[1] and is generally used of what God commands through prophets and priests.

Since the enactments of the P code are comparatively seldom cited or implied it is strange that Wellhausen[2], Cornill[3], and others should hold that Ezra's *torah* was the P code, though the latter passed through later changes and received later additions. It is exceedingly unlikely that the P code could have been designated the 'law of Moses' (Ezra vii. 6, Neh. viii. 1), 'the law of Yahweh' (Ezra vii. 10), 'the law of God' (Ezra vii. 14, Neh. viii. 8, &c.), or 'all the commandments, ordinances, and statutes of Yahweh' (Neh. x. 29).

Moreover the laws in Ezra-Nehemiah are often different from those of P, and belong to an older stratum of the national life. The pre-exilic custom of offering one whole offering in the morning and one cereal offering in the evening is that implied and followed in Neh. x. 34 (33) (see on). The custom enforced in Ezek. xlvi. 13–15 (both offerings in the morning) and in P (Num. xxviii. 3–8, both offerings in the morning and also in the evening) are those of a later time. It must be borne in mind that Ezekiel's code (xl–xlviii) was an ideal, a programme to be realized in after times. According to P (Exod. xxx. 13; 2 Chron. xxiv. 4 f., &c.) the poll-tax for the upkeep of the Temple is half a shekel. But the law enforced by Ezra or Nehemiah or both makes the tax one-third of a shekel (see Neh. x. 32 f., and the note on).

Ezra ix. 6–15 and Neh. ix, which have many resemblances, are conceived and expressed much in the manner of D; there is nothing of the kind in P.

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[1] Professors Sayce, Haupt, and Zimmern (see *KAT.*(3) 606, note 3) connect the Heb. *torah* with the Bab. *tertu* (= 'the message of a god'), which in the time of Hammurabi had assumed the technical sense of 'a divinely revealed law,' as e.g. the Hammurabi Code. The cognate Bab. verb (*êrû*) means 'to send a message.'

[2] *Proleg.* Eng. Ed. 408 ff.; *Geschichte* (6), 177 ff.

[3] Introd. 112 ff.; Germ. Ed. (5) 58 ff.

The law of the Sabbatic year in Neh. x. 31 (see on) agrees with Exod. xxiii. 10 f. (**JE**) rather than with Lev. xxv. 2–7 (**H**).

For other laws absent from **P** yet found in older codes and referred to in Ezra-Nehemiah see on Neh. x. 30, 39, and on many other passages in the present volume.

Many laws and customs mentioned or implied have no counterpart anywhere in the Old Testament: see on Neh. x. 34.

If it was the **P** code that Ezra published and tried to enforce it is strange that so few of its provisions seem to have been realized, though the *argumentum e silentio* is admittedly a precarious one. The observance of the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned twice in these books (Ezra iii. 4–7, Neh. viii. 13–18), both of them falling within the scope of Ezra's activity (see on, Neh. vii. 73^{b}–x). Nehemiah, otherwise so punctilious about keeping the law, seems to have no concern about the feast. The Passover is mentioned once only in these books, viz. in Ezra vi. 19, but neither Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks) nor the Day of Atonement is even mentioned. Stade[1] thinks that Ezra's *torah* was an enlarged edition of the Holiness Code (**H**, Lev. xvii–xxvi), and Kuenen[2] says it must have included this code.

But Geissler in his valuable monograph *Die literarischen Beziehungen der Ezra-Memoiren* (1899) has made it abundantly evident that all the Hexateuch sources have been drawn upon in Ezra vii–x, and the present writer has brought together proofs of the same kind relating to the rest of Ezra-Nehemiah, and is prevented by exigencies of space alone from setting them forth here.

Ezra's *torah* corresponds neither to our Pentateuch nor to the Hexateuch, and still less to any one of the recognized Hexateuch sources (**JE**, **D**, **P**). It seems to have been a collection of laws agreeing mainly with the laws in **D** and **H**, and, in a less degree, with those in **P**. This collection was probably made by Ezra himself from the

[1] *Gesch.* ii. 181. [2] *Ges. Abhandlungen* (Budde), p. 390.

mass of histories and codes brought together in Babylon, which at length crystalized into our Hexateuch.

That this code came to be called the '*Torah* (=Instruction Book) of Moses' (Ezra vii. 6) means no more than that it rested upon a nucleus of law which was rightly ascribed to the great Jewish lawgiver himself. As time went on and the name 'Moses' gathered about it more and more halo it would be natural to associate the whole of the Five Books with his name, just as the 'Five Books' of the Psalter came to be connected with the name 'David,' the Moses of song. Indeed, already in the times with which we are dealing, the expression 'the *Torah* of Moses,' 'of God,' or 'of Yahweh,' had come to have a somewhat technical sense—'the Lawbook for the community of Yahweh founded by Moses.'

IV. The Principal Sources of Ezra-Nehemiah.

Here are to be briefly enumerated the principal materials out of which, in the opinion of the present writer, the final editor (R, i.e. Redactor) wove the existing narrative, not omitting the part contributed by the editor himself. It is not necessary in this place to consider the complex code (*torah*) according to which both Ezra and Nehemiah sought to act and to make others act (see § 3). This became a part of the history which Ezra-Nehemiah contains, and is involved in that history. It is quite evident that these books are more or less compilations—that they are not homogeneous compositions. This is made quite clear by many considerations.

1. The interchange of the first and third persons when Ezra or Nehemiah is the theme of the narrative. In some cases the transition from one person to another is very sudden, as in Ezra ix. 15 and x. 1; Neh. vii. 5 f. and 7 ff.; xii. 26 and 27 ff.; xiii. 1–3 and verses 4 ff.

2. The lack of continuity in the narrative. Between Ezra vi. 22 and vii. 1 there is a break in the narrative representing a period of some sixty years. An editor at a later time would not be greatly struck by this gap when

viewing the past as a whole. Moreover, the Book of Ezra itself has no natural ending, even when we have added to it Neh. vii. 73[b]–x; and many small sections are obviously incomplete, as e. g. that closing with Neh. xii. 43. These two books are, to a large extent, a patchwork, and the pieces joined are sometimes but fragments.

3. Each book displays differences of vocabulary, phrasing, and spirit, though this is in an eminent degree true of Ezra with its 'Aramaic' and 'I' sections. Nothing is more striking in this connexion than the Aramaic portions of Ezra. See below.

4. There are apparent discrepancies which could hardly have existed if the whole had come from one hand. Beside the variations in identical genealogies (see Ezra ii, Neh. vii, &c.) compare Ezra iii. 4 ff. and Neh. viii. 13–18, especially ver. 17.

ANNOTATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PRINCIPAL SOURCES.

Note that the designating letter precedes the description of the source.

T. Temple records, embracing all extant documents relating to the Temple and its officials, but more especially from the return in the time of Cyrus. Such records must have been carefully preserved after the restoration of the sanctuary, probably in one of the Temple treasuries (see on Ezra viii. 29, x. 6). Ezra i–vi belongs as a whole to this source, though the whole has been worked over by a Redactor (R). Nothing would be more likely to be scrupulously guarded than the official documents, all in Aramaic except i. 2–4, as during the Persian period they constituted a kind of official recognition of the national religion. Ezra iv. 7–23 (see on) belongs to source C, to be noticed later.

T_A. The Aramaic parts of T. These are in themselves of sufficient importance to deserve a separate notice. They are the following, all of them in Ezra:

1. Correspondence between Persian officials in Palestine and Darius I concerning the building of the Temple,

the purpose of the first named being to hinder the work, iv. 7–v. 12.

2. Letter of Artaxerxes I to Ezra officially recognizing the Jewish religion and its central sanctuary, vii. 12–26.

We have a similar Aramaic document in iv. 8–22, and though this has to do with *wall*-building and is to be subsumed under C (C_A, see below) it is convenient to consider it in connexion with the above.

Most recent writers regard these Aramaic sections as genuine though somewhat altered from their original form; thus Driver, Cornill (later editions), Strack, Baudissin, and Budde in their Introductions, Ryle, Siegfried, Guthe, and Bertholet in their Commentaries, and also v. Hoonacker, Klostermann.

Aramaic seems in the fifth century B.C. to have been the language of diplomacy between the various courts and governments of Western Asia, just as French was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries A.D. the *lingua franca* of Western Europe. The recently discovered Aramaic papyri give countenance to this, though the proofs are not very decisive. As the Aramaic portions of Ezra embrace rather more than the official documents many (v. Hoonacker, Driver, Baudissin) have held that there existed originally an Aramaic history from which the parts in Ezra are extracted.

Quite recently[1] Sir Henry H. Howorth has put forth and defended the strange view that Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, and other post-exilic books were written originally in Aramaic, the Jewish doctors at the Jamnia Council (*circa* A.D. 90) having translated it into the Hebrew of the M.T., retaining parts of the original Aramaic in Ezra and Daniel.

Since the publication of E. Meyer's remarkable essay on *The Rise of Judaism*[2] (not yet put into English notwithstanding its value and enormous influence) German opinion has become much more favourable to the trustworthiness

[1] *PSBA.*, xxxi. 89–99, 156–68.

[2] *Die Entstehung des Judenthums*, Halle, 1896.

of these Aramaic parts. Graetz, Nöldeke, Torrey, and Kent regard them as pure forgeries of the Chronicler, who was anxious to win respect and increased devotion for Judaism by representing it as having received in the past the sanctions of kings and governments. This is not, however, the impression which an unprejudiced reading gives. The language of these documents agrees so closely with that of the Aramaic papyri as to prove that they belong to the same period, viz. the fifth century B. C., though Torrey, in his latest contribution to the subject[1], makes a gallant but bootless attempt to prove the contrary. Wellhausen pronounces these documents spurious, but he assumes their genuineness when constructing his history of Israel. The weightiest objection to the historicity of the Aramaic section is their strong Jewish colouring, just as, it is supposed, the Chronicler might be expected to give them. This applies also and, indeed, specially to the Cyrus edict, i. 2–4, which Meyer, by a singular inconsistency, holds to be a fiction of the Chronicler. But we have to note these things :

1. The Persian king would be sure to have about him Jewish officials to advise him when dealing with Palestine and its people.

2. When drawing up edicts or the like in which Jewish interests were favoured, especially when Jewish requests were granted, it is not unreasonable to think that he left the wording to Jews.

3. We know from the history of Persian kings that they were in the habit of associating themselves with the various nationalities subject to them in the religions they professed. In the well-known clay cylinder of Cyrus (reproduced in substance in *Century Bible*, Isa. vol. ii, 342 f.) this king, though a Persian, speaks of himself as the servant of Marduk (Merodak), Babylon's principal god, and as restoring to their sanctuaries the deities whom Nabonidus had taken away. We have a very remarkable example of this in the Gadatas inscription found in Magnesia to

[1] *AJSL.*, April, 1908.

the east of Thessaly in 1889. In it Darius, son of Hystaspes, complains of the way in which the Persian governor, Gadatas, had treated the priests of Apollo in the above province. He recognizes in Apollo the deity who has spoken to his ancestors and helped them. When Cambyses conquered Egypt and made Uzahor, an Egyptian priest, his chief physician, the latter so wrought on the mind of his master that the Persian king gave orders for the restoration of the cultus and temple of the goddess Nît (mother of the Sun-god) at Sais, and accompanied the act by many expressions of esteem for that deity[1]. There need not be any insincerity in the language used by Cyrus in Ezra i, or in that ascribed to Artaxerxes in Ezra vii. 12–26. All along the Persian is thinking about his own Ahura-mazda, called by different people under other names and viewed in varying ways, yet all the while the same one supreme Good Spirit. That ancient Zoroastrianism was capable of taking this philosophical view of the religions of the world, of seeing the one in the many, is proved by what we know of it (see p. 40).

Moreover, there is great probability that the Persians were well disposed to Judaism on account of its many affinities with their own religion, as e. g. its high ethical spirit, its Dualism, &c. It was the Persian's lofty conception of the Supreme Deity that led him to create the conception of a rival spirit to whom was ascribed the evil that is in the universe. Moreover the Sachau Aramaic papyri (§§ 13 f.) tell us that when Cambyses, son of Cyrus, campaigned in Egypt he spared the Jewish temple at Yeb, though he destroyed the sanctuaries of the Egyptians, the priests of the latter being probably sowers of disloyalty among the people.

T_R denotes **T** as edited by a later Redactor.

C. City records, that is, written notices concerning the population, registers of clans, families, and of civil officials, accounts of building operations—wall buildings, &c. I include also under **C** the sections describing the work of

[1] Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, pp. 40 ff.

both Ezra and Nehemiah, and as far as subject-matter is concerned the autobiographical parts (see **E** and **N** below) might also be subsumed here.

C_A. This symbol will stand only for Ezra iv. 7–23, which, though in Aramaic, has to do with the rebuilding of the walls and not of the Temple.

E. The Ezra biographical history, the 'I' sections of Ezra, viz. vii. 27–ix.

N. The Nehemiah autobiographical history, containing Nehemiah's own account of his coming to Jerusalem and of his work there. This embraces Neh. i–vii. 5 (to which should probably be added verses $6–73^a$) + xiii. 4–31. Hardly any writer has ventured to impugn the genuineness or authenticity of this 'I' record.

R. Parts due to a Redactor or Redactors. It is quite the fashion to make the Chronicler responsible for what, in this volume, is ascribed to a Redactor or Redactors. The resemblances between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah in words, phraseology, and point of view, are held to prove that one man, or at least men of one school, edited, co-ordinated, and assimilated all these books. But the fact that the differences are more striking than the resemblances makes this supposition quite untenable.

1. In Ezra-Nehemiah singers and porters form classes outside of the Levites (cf. Ezra ii. 40 ff. (see on); Neh. vii. 43 ff., x. 28, &c.). In Chronicles the general word 'Levites' includes all (see 1 Chron. xxiii. 3–5, &c.). The departures from this distinction are probably the result of late editing; they are, however, but few, notwithstanding the averments of Torrey to the contrary.

2. The same genealogies differ in Ezra-Nehemiah and in Chronicles (cf. Neh. xi and 1 Chron. ix). Had the whole Ezra-Chronicles been fashioned by one governing mind he would have prevented such discrepancies.

3. There are other differences which one general editor would have removed, such as that between the two accounts of the observance of Tabernacles in Ezra already noticed (see p. 10).

4. Chronicles is consistently at the point of view of P, but Ezra-Nehemiah views things prevailingly from an earlier point of view: see on Neh. ix. 6–37.

5. The stage of law and custom in Ezra-Nehemiah agrees in many important respects with that implied in Malachi, so that a similar date for both is highly probable: see under 'Date,' p. 18 f.

6. We come across the phrase 'Aaronites' (lit. sons of Aaron) constantly in Chronicles as in P (see especially Ex. to Num.), but only once is it found in Ezra-Nehemiah and in a context (Neh. xii. 47) that has many marks of late date: see, however, Ezra vii. 5, and Neh. x. 38. Moreover, the subdivisions of the Levites (Gershonites, &c., see 1 Chron. vi. 16 ff.), a prominent feature in Chron., are passed over in silence in Ezra-Nehemiah.

7. The means of support of the priests and Levites differ in Ezra-Nehemiah (see Neh. x. 35 ff.) and Chronicles (see 1 Chron. vi. 54 ff.).

8. We have ample external evidence, Jewish and Christian, that in very ancient times Ezra-Nehemiah was treated as one book, but there is not a particle of such evidence that Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah formed one whole.

9. For a discussion of the Aramaic sections of Ezra see p. 12 ff. These are ascribed to the imagination of the Chronicler by many who hold Ezra-Nehemiah to be largely the work of the Chronicler.

10. The dominant position of the priesthood in Chronicles does not confront us in Ezra-Nehemiah. There are civil, as well as religious heads, and the former (cf. Zerubbabel, Nehemiah) bulk much more largely in the history and the records than the latter. Yet there is the beginning of what in Chronicles is consummated. The priests are named apart from the Levites (Ezra ii, Neh. vii), and in the case of Eliashib we see a man who in Nehemiah's absence exercised a power reminding one of the priest-kings of Maccabean days (Neh. xiii. 4, 28).

It is assumed that whatever sources have been used and are indicated in the text have been more or less edited by **R**.

V. Date of Ezra-Nehemiah.

Ezra-Nehemiah seems to reflect the same set of circumstances that are implied in Malachi. This is in particular true of Nehemiah, in which as in Malachi these three things stand out:—

1. Laxity in the priesthood. See Malachi i. 6–ii. 9; cf. Neh. xiii. 4–9, 28.

2. The neglect of the payment of tithe. See Malachi iii. 7–12; cf. Neh. xiii. 10–14.

3. Mixed marriages. See Malachi ii. 10–16; cf. Neh. ix. 2; x. 28, 30; xiii. 23–29; Ezra ix. 1 ff.; x. 1 ff.

In the extant book of Ezra 3 only of the above finds a place, but in the complete Ezra records, which probably existed at one time, the other evils might likewise have been dealt with. The closer affinity of Malachi and Nehemiah has, however, led many scholars (Kuenen, Kirk., &c.) to fix the date of Malachi during the second visit of Nehemiah in 432 B. C.

But there are several points in Malachi which link it with the time before the priestly code came into vogue. The word 'Levites' has the broad sense of **D**, and not the narrow meaning it bears in **P** and Chronicles: see ii. 4; iii. 3.

Priests and Levites are differentiated also in Ezra-Nehemiah,[1] but there is as yet no antagonism between the two classes, and, in fact, the priests receive their support in part by the hands of the Levites. See Neh. x. 32 f. This would suit a period 460 B. C. or so.

Morever the Heb. word *minkhah* has in Malachi the generic sense 'an offering of any kind' as in the older codes: see i. 10f., 13; ii. 12 f.; iii. 34. So apparently in Neh.

[1] See Ezra i. 5 and the note on.

xiii. 5. In P it has the meaning 'cereal' (E.VV. 'meal') in distinction from the 'animal' offering (*zebakh*). It is probable, therefore, that Malachi was written before 458 B. C. (W. Rob. Smith, Wellh., Now., Marti), or at latest before the publication of the complete Hexateuch (G. A. Smith).

It is, of course, quite possible for the language of a former day to be kept up after it has ceased to express the ideas of the actual time; but this prophecy is serious; it seems to come red-hot from the times, and to be as realistic as any sermon or sermons could well be.

There are in Ezra-Nehemiah some touches which show late editing if nothing more. Ewald's contention[1] that the expression 'Cyrus, King of Persia' belongs to a time when the Persian supremacy had become a thing of the past, though largely adopted, has little to support it. If, as history shows, Cyrus had in 538 but recently become king of Persia, it would be natural in this record to give him this designation: or there might have been others bearing this name when this history was written. The expressions 'Saul, King of Israel,'[2] 'Hiram, King of Tyre,'[3] 'Rehoboam, King of Judah,'[4] and 'Shishak, King of Egypt,'[5] do not mean that when they were first written the various kingdoms implied had ceased to exist, though we may not know for certain why the name of the country is appended.

In Neh. xii. 11, 22, in the lists of high-priests, Jaddua is mentioned as third after Eliashib, i. e. three generations after Nehemiah's time, for Nehemiah and Eliashib were contemporaries. Now this Jaddua must be the high-priest of that name whom Josephus[6] brings into connexion with Alexander the Great, and who must therefore have functioned about 330 B. C.

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[1] *History of Isr.*, i. 173.
[2] 1 Sam. xxix. 3.
[3] 1 Kings ix. 11.
[4] 1 Kings xii. 27.
[5] 1 Kings xiv. 25.
[6] *Antiq.* viii. 8, 5, and 9, 1.

As he is named last, and as if he were a contemporary of the writer, these verses at least seem to belong to about 330 B. C., though Vitringa, Keil, Ewald, and Rawlinson may be quite right in saying that these verses are late insertions.

The words 'in the days of Nehemiah'[1] could not have been written during that leader's lifetime, but that does not help much in ascertaining the date of the book. It is not unlikely that the use in Neh. i. 11 of the word *Adonai* (Lord), apparently for *Yahweh*, implies a date subsequent to the introduction among the Jews of the custom of substituting the former for the latter. But we do not know when this custom began; all that can be definitely said is that it is older than the oldest part of the LXX.

The context makes it highly probable that 'Darius the Persian' in Neh. xii. 22 is Darius Codomannus (336–233 B. C.), but, as already remarked, the whole of this verse has been largely held to be an interpolation.

Zunz, Rosenzweig, Nöldeke, and Reuss make Ezra-Nehemiah a product of the third century B. C. if not later. But even the latest parts are a sufficient answer to this, for the last high-priest known to the final redactor is Jaddua (about 330 B. C.), and the remaining parts of these books have every impress of a much earlier date.

One may safely say that Ezra-Nehemiah as a whole is made up out of contemporary records kept in the Temple or elsewhere, sacred and civic: that with very few exceptions the final editing was completed before the publication of the P code, i. e. prob. before 400 B. C. But there are some marks of a later date, though so few and isolated as to make it probable they are not original parts of these books.

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[1] Neh. xii. 26, 47.

VI. Some Recent Discussions bearing on these Books or on the History which these Books contain.

During the last half-century more discussions have arisen and more books been written about Ezra-Nehemiah than about any other equal portion of the Old Testament, and we seem as far as ever from finality on the matter. To these discussions British scholars have contributed but little, though the writings of Sayce, Ryle, Sir Henry Howorth, and Cheyne bearing on the subject are worthy of praise. America is represented by the radical and destructive criticism of Torrey[1], who has found followers in his fellow countrymen H. P. Smith, C. F. Kent, and perhaps L. W. Batten. The books and articles by Dutch (Kuenen, Kosters, &c.), French (v. Hoonacker), and especially by German (Bertheau-Ryssel, Sellin, &c.) scholars are legion. In the limited space allowed in this volume the present writer is unable fully to state, much less adequately to estimate, the opinions put forth.

1. Up to the time of W. H. Kosters (d. as Professor at Leyden in 1897) the books of Ezra-Nehemiah were generally considered by scholars to rest on contemporary sources, and therefore to be historical—with but slight exceptions. It was Kosters who started the theory that throughout these two books the Chronicler has been busily at work, altering, transposing, and inventing to make the whole tally with his notions of the religious history of Israel. In the result we have much more of the Chronicler than of the historian. Kosters, however, did not deny or call in question the main facts of Ezra's life and work as they are portrayed in Ezra vii–x, though he regarded Ezra vii–x as the creation of the Chronicler's mind, and held the true chronological order to be Nehemiah-Ezra, not the contrary. Dr. C. C. Torrey, of Yale Univer-

[1] See Bibliography, p. 37.

sity, proceeded further along the path opened up by Kosters[1], for he holds that the only genuine and authentic parts of the two books are the Nehemiah memoirs (Neh. i-vii. 5). He agrees with Renan[2] that the Ezra memoirs were fabricated by members of the priestly (Renan adds, the Pharisee) classes, who could not tolerate the thought that the re-establishment and purification of Judaism were the doing of a layman, and so they invented the priestly character Ezra and ascribed to him a rôle not second to that of Nehemiah. But unlike Torrey Renan accepts as historical the events narrated in Ezra i–vi, i. e. the return under Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the rebuilding of the Temple mainly by returned exiles, though he holds there were many parties returned from Babylon at as many different times.

The following are the principal grounds on which Renan, Torrey, &c., reject the tale of Ezra—told in Ezra vii–x. (1) Nehemiah does not mention Ezra or his work. But nothing in Biblical literature is more remarkable than the silences of writers and workers about each other, cf. Amos and Hosea; Isaiah and Micah; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah; Haggai and Zechariah. (2) Ezra is apparently unknown to Ben Sira[3] and to the author of 2 Maccabees[4]; but see under 1. Torrey has put together a large number of words and idioms found in Ezra vii. 1–10 which occur also in Chronicles. But note

(*a*) Many of those adduced are to be seen also in other post-exilic writings of the O.T., showing that they belong to the period which followed the return.

(*b*) There are, as previously remarked, terms and expressions in Ezra vii–x showing an acquaintance with older sources (JE, D, &c.), but none at all with P, and

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[1] See *Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah*, 1896, and more recent articles in *AJSL.*

[2] *Histoire*, &c., Livre VII, cap. viii. Books I–VI have alone been translated into English.

[3] Sir. xlix. 12 ff. [4] See i. 10 ff.

related Scriptures. Geissler has brought together a large collection of such [1].

(*c*) There are linguistic features in Ezra vii–x which, though post-exilic and absent from **D**, are absent from Chronicles, and suggest sources different from those followed by the Chronicler.

It is not without significance in this connexion that Ezra belongs to the priestly class as does the Chronicler. They might, therefore, be expected beforehand to have similar interests and to be characterized by similar modes of speech.

2. Kosters, following Vernes, held that the second Temple was built by Jews who had never been in exile, and not, as would appear from Ezra i–vi, by returned exiles. The principal reasons mentioned are these:

(1) Nothing is said by Haggai or Zechariah in urging the people to complete the building, implying that those addressed were returned exiles. In reply it may be said that there is not a syllable in the writings of these prophets suggesting that the builders were not returned exiles. The theme with which these preachers are occupied is the work, not the workers.

(2) Kosters, Cheyne, and others maintain there was no return under Cyrus, or none deserving the name; the first important batch of exiles being that led by Ezra. This involves the position that the official Aramaic documents in Ezra are spurious, as also the Cyrus edict in Ezra i. 2–4. Meyer [2] has, however, made it practically certain that the Aramaic extracts in Ezra are *bona fide* and are the product of the period to which in Ezra they are assigned, and the same reasoning proves that the Cyrus proclamation is also genuine, though possibly tinged by Jewish influence: see p. 40 and on Ezra i. 1–4.

On the other side the following points are weighty:

(*a*) Such a return is implied in II Isaiah, where Cyrus

[1] See *op. cit.* [2] *op. cit.*

is referred to by name or otherwise. He is Yahweh's friend, who executes His will and says to Jerusalem, 'be built,' and to the Temple, 'let thy foundation be laid[1].' Yahweh calls him His anointed one, who on account of the task allotted him of delivering Israel is enabled to triumph over all his foes.[2] These words and the like represent hopes and expectations in Israel about the time in question, and if they are *post eventum* in their origin, all the same they prove that the event implied had taken place, or the writer would not stultify himself by expressing as expectations things which the actual facts of the time proved to be impossible.

(*b*) If no return about 538 B. C. took place, what are we to make of the words *gôla* and *bene gôla* ('exile' and 'exiles') which stand in contradistinction to the 'people of the land' in 2 Kings xxiv. 14, xxv. 12, and elsewhere? These returned exiles are spoken of not only in Ezra i–vi, but also in Ezra ix. 4, x. 6; Neh. i. 2 f. Of the people left in the country a few joined themselves to the community fresh from Babylon, but they are never mentioned by themselves as an independent social unit, and in the account of the rebuilding and of the reforms they are virtually ignored. Eight years or so after the return the Jewish community in and about Jerusalem has the name *gola*, i. e. exiles, or the congregation of the *Gola*[3].

(*c*) The character given by Ezekiel (see xxviii. 23 ff.) to the unexiled Jews does not make one think they were the people to have much concern about the restoration of the Temple and also of Jewish orthodoxy. Indeed, the second Isaiah in his forecast of the new time leaves them out of account, and Jeremiah speaks of them with no more respect than Ezekiel.

It is evident from many parts of Ezekiel that the prophet and his companion exiles expected a return: see xxxvi. 8–15. Not at all improbably this expectation was

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[1] xliv. 28. [2] xlv. 1 ff.
[3] Ezra ix. 4, x. 6, 7, 16. [4] Ezra x. 8; cf. Neh. i. 2 f.

awakened by the movements of Cyrus and a knowledge of the policy he pursued towards deported people.

3. The French writers de Saulcy, Havet, Vernes, Imbert, Halévy[1], and especially v. Hoonacker (Roman Catholic Professor at Louvain) and the Dutch scholar Kosters[2], have endeavoured to prove that the true chronological order is Nehemiah-Ezra and not the contrary, or at least that Nehemiah's attempts at reform preceded those of Ezra. Some of their reasons are the following: —

(1) When Ezra arrived at Jerusalem he found the city in a peaceable and orderly condition, which, it is said, implies that the walls had been repaired and the city otherwise fortified. But how can we so argue when our knowledge of the state of things is so meagre? Of the sixty years preceding Ezra's arrival we know nothing—what in that interval took place we have at present no means of finding out.

(2) If (it is said) the reforming measures of Ezra had been taken before the arrival of Nehemiah the latter must have mentioned them. One may turn the same argument against v. Hoonacker and Kosters and say, if Nehemiah's reforms antedated the arrival of Ezra, the latter must have made some allusion to them. In fact any *argumentum e silentio* is precarious, especially if it has reference to the writings of the O. T.: see p. 10.

(3) It is further maintained that Ezra's reforms were much more radical and extreme than those of Nehemiah, for whereas Ezra demands the divorce of all foreign wives[3], Nehemiah goes no further than to forbid intermarriage between Jewish children and the children of foreigners[4]. The work of Nehemiah has therefore, it is inferred, all the appearance of being tentative and intro-

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[1] *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1886, 334–58.
[2] *op. cit.*
[3] See Ezra x. 11 f. [4] Neh. xiii. 25.

ductory to that of Ezra. Here again the reasoning is of the *a priori* kind, and in reply one may say that the failure of the more drastic reforms attempted by Ezra would be sure to lead to milder measures. Moreover, the rise and growing influence of the Samaritan party led to a broadening of sympathies and outlook which the Persian officials would be sure to encourage. Indeed, such a latitudinarian tendency, alike in belief and in the cultus, grew and spread throughout the land until it was suddenly checked by the Maccabean uprising. Among those who make Ezra's reforms follow upon Nehemiah's there are considerable divergences of opinions as to details. v. Hoonacker[1] says Ezra came to Jerusalem first of all in the reign of Artaxerxes I, and for a time worked with Nehemiah, but soon returned to Babylon, whence he set out again for Jerusalem in the reign of Artaxerxes II, i. e. about 398 B. C., this time armed with great authority, which he used in putting down the mixed marriages. Kosters[2] puts the work of Ezra after the incidents of Neh. xiii. Wellhausen[3] seems to think that the reading and expounding of the law (Neh. viii) by Ezra belong to the period of Nehemiah's second visit, though he does not deny the arrival of Ezra in 458 B. C., or call in question the part ascribed to him in putting down mixed marriages.

Franz Buhl, Professor of Arabic at Copenhagen, for some years Franz Delitzsch's successor at Leipzic, has recently published a history of Israel in Danish in which in the relevant portion he endeavours to make good the following theses :—

1. That Nehemiah, having received the king's permission, came to Jerusalem in 445 B. C., repaired the walls and introduced certain social reforms, returning thereupon to Susa after an absence of twelve years, Neh. i–vii. 5.

2. Subsequently Ezra came from Babylon to Jerusalem,

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[1] *Nouvelles Études*, &c., 270 ff. [2] *op. cit.*
[3] *Geschichte* (6), 177 f.

bringing with him the law book which he endeavoured to put into practice. His efforts to put an end to mixed marriages were however unsuccessful, whereupon he returned to Babylon, Ezra vii–x.

3. Nehemiah finding Ezra's efforts unavailing returned to Jerusalem, and succeeded in carrying out in a less drastic way the reforms which Ezra failed to carry out, Neh. xi–xiii.

It is noteworthy that the reasoning by which it is sought to prove that Ezra's visit, or at least the bulk of his work, followed that of Nehemiah is almost exclusively of the *a priori* kind, and can be met by *a priori* considerations of a contrary kind. In no codex, edition, or version of the Hebrew Bible has any different order of the history of these Jewish leaders been found, and tradition, Jewish and Christian, is completely on the side of the old view—Ezra first then Nehemiah. Tradition has indeed in other things been proved to be wrong, but it can be discarded only at the call of evidence clear and cogent.

4. Much has of late years been written as to the relation between the Canonical Ezra and the Apocryphal 1 Esdras (Vulg. 3 Esdras), which in matter coincide in the main. 1 Esdras is, however, more extensive than Ezra, for at its beginning (ch. i) it has 2 Chron. xxxv. 1–xxxvi. 21, and at its close (ix. 37–55) it adds Neh. vii. 73^{b}–viii. 12, besides which it inserts 1 Esdras iii. 1–vi (Darius and the three youths, guards of the royal chamber, Zerubbabel being one of them). From the fact that 1 Esdras, besides embracing Ezra, has also at its beginning and end parts of Chronicles and Nehemiah, it has been concluded by many modern scholars that our present 1 Esdras is but the fragment of an older document which included Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah in that order.

Moreover a large number of scholars, especially of recent times, take the view that 1 Esdras represents the true LXX, the original Canonical Ezra corresponding to

it having been lost. So Whiston[1], Pohlmann, Ginsburg, Cheyne, Howorth[2], Bertholet, Nestle, and Torrey. Bertholet, Torrey, and others maintain that the section 1 Esdras iii. 1-v. 6, which is unworthy of its context, and moreover contradicts chronologically the preceding chapters, is a late interpolation and had no Hebrew original. Howorth, however, strenuously argues for the genuineness of this part of 1 Esdras, holding, as others have before him, that its Greek is interlarded with Hebraisms (Deissmann and Moulton would hardly allow the designation), just as is the rest of the book.

What has passed as the LXX of Daniel, and as such is printed in copies of the LXX, has in recent years been proved in reality to be Theodotion's version, the true LXX rendering being found in the so-called Greek codex Chisianus (from the family Chigi who owned it). In a similar way it is argued that the Greek version of Esdras now found in the LXX is in reality Theodotion's version, 1 Esdras representing the LXX version.

The evidence offered is external and internal.

1. *External.* (*a*) Josephus uses it in all cases, though for other books it is the LXX he follows. In fact for the period covered by 1 Esdras, Josephus's history is little more than a paraphrase of this book.

(*b*) There are, Howorth says[3], strong reasons for believing that in Origen's Hexapla 1 Esdras takes the place of our LXX version.

(*c*) In the foreword to the Syriac version of 1 Esdras in Walton's Polyglot it is said that this version was made from the LXX.

(*d*) In the Syriac version of Paulus of Tella, 1 Esdras takes the place of the Canonical Ezra.

(*e*) Howorth will have it[4] that in the *Vetus Itala* also 1 Esdras had the place which in our Bible Ezra holds.

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[1] *Essay on the Text of the O.T.*
[2] See articles in *Academy*, Jan., June 1893; *PSBA.*
[3] *PSBA.* xxiv. p. 156. [4] *loc. cit.* 168.

2. *Internal evidence.* (*a*) It is held by Dr. Gwyn[1], Thackeray,[2] and Howorth that the Greek of the true LXX of Daniel is remarkably like that of 1 Esdras, though, as Thackeray remarks, this proves only that one man translated both. On the contrary, Howorth adds that the present LXX of Daniel and of Ezra are both very literal, as we know Theodotion's version was. The present writer has read the two Greek texts, that of Ezra and that of 1 Esdras, without feeling strongly the cogency of this latter remark. Similarly Howorth endeavours now to prove that the Apocryphal *Prayer of Manasseh* represents a portion of the true LXX of 2 Chron. xxx. 3.[3]

Keil, followed by Bissell and (formerly) by Schürer[4], held that 1 Esdras is a compilation based on the LXX version of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The grounds for this conclusion and a succinct discussion of other views can be seen in Bissell's valuable commentary on the Apocrypha.

Herzfeld, Fritsche, Ginsburg, Thackeray, Nestle, and (formerly) Ewald hold that 1 Esdras is an independent Greek translation from a now lost Hebrew (or Aramaic) original in many respects superior to our M.T. This is the latest view of Schürer[5], and it is that supported by Howorth.

The opinion advocated by Ewald in the later editions of his *History* is that 1 Esdras is the result of a working over of an earlier Greek translation now lost. This assumes that there were two independent Greek translations of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, as we now know there were of Daniel.

The notes in this volume on Ezra-Nehemiah will show that the present writer has often found 1 Esdras more serviceable in the restoration of the correct Hebrew text than

[1] Smith, *DB*(2)., Esdras A. [2] Hastings, *DB.*, i. 761 B.
[3] *PSBA.* xxxi. 89 ff.
[4] *History of the Jewish People*, ii. iii. 179 f.; *Herzog*(2), i. 496 f.
[5] *Herzog*(2), i. 637.

the M.T. On the other hand he has had in at least as many instances to reject the readings implied in 1 Esdras. And certainly 1 Esdras iii–v. 6 cannot have formed a part of the original 1 Esdras in either Hebrew or Greek, for it stands in contradiction to the rest of the book, forms no essential part of it, and, moreover, occupies lower ground than the rest of the book.

On the whole 1 Esdras has a better sequence of events than our Ezra-Nehemiah (see on Neh. vii. 73 ^{b} ff.), and it represents not improbably a better Hebrew (and Aramaic) original, in which case it is to be reckoned a part of the true LXX of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah.

VII. Contemporary Literature.

The period covered by Ezra-Nehemiah was on the whole a barren one from the literary point of view, as might have been expected, for it was a time of national reconstruction, and the energies of the leaders of the people were spent in the work of restoring the old institutions, and reorganizing the new community.

Cheyne[1], Briggs[2], and other writers on the Psalter, agree that in the early and middle Persian period, i.e. in the period which comprehends the life and work of Ezra and Nehemiah, there was a great burst of sacred song. Among such Briggs reckons forty whole psalms and portions of ten others. All the so-called 'persecution psalms' are included (Ps. xxvi. &c.), the persecutors being the Samaritan party. Though certainty on the matter is unattainable, for no one of these psalms bears decisive date-marks, yet strong evidence of an accumulative kind supports in a general way the conclusions of Cheyne and Briggs, which in the main agree. Renan in his *History*[3] connects a large number of the same psalms with this period. The so-called 'royal' or 'theocratic psalms'

[1] *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 230 *et passim*. [2] Ps. i, lxxxix f.
[3] Book vii, untranslated into English.

(xciii–c, except xciv) are commonly interpreted as voicing the confidence in the Divine rule which the deliverance from Babylon called forth (see on Ps. xciii, Introduction, *Century Bible*).

It has been already shown that Malachi must have been composed before 458 B.C., or at latest before 444 B.C.[1]

Another literary product of the time is, according to most recent scholars, the Book of Ruth, written primarily as a protest against the prohibition of mixed marriages by Ezra and Nehemiah. The writer might himself have been guilty of the very sin which these leaders so strongly denounced; but in any case he seems in this charming idyll to champion the cause of foreign women, who like 'Ruth the Moabitess' (constantly so called by a kind of delicate irony) had married into Israel, and whom it seemed cruel to cast adrift to shift for themselves, a precarious task for an Eastern woman.

Isa. lviii. 13f. and Jer. xvii. 19–27, each enforcing strict sabbath observance, are connected by modern criticism with Neh. ix. 14 and xiii. 15–21, and made to arise under the influence of the same religious movement. Both passages stand apart from their present context, and are regarded by most recent scholars as late interpolations. It is significant that the Sabbath is not once referred to in II Isaiah (except in the above verses), Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, or even in Genesis, except in the account of its establishment (ii. 2f. P).

Large portions of Isaiah besides the above are assigned to the Persian period. Duhm regarded practically the whole of Isa. lvi–lxiv (called by him 'Trito-Isaiah') as belonging to the time of Nehemiah, and (except in lxiii. 7–lxiv. 12 (Heb. 11), and other smaller sections) Cheyne and Whitehouse follow him. According to Cheyne and Driver

[1] See p. 18f.

Isa. xxiv-xxvii (Cheyne and Whitehouse add xxxiv f.) belong to the close of the Persian period (*circa* 350?). See for details the commentaries on Isaiah, especially Marti and also Whitehouse, *Century Bible.*

VIII. Important Dates in Jewish, Persian, &c. History.

N.B. All the dates are B.C.

Jewish.	Persian.	Greek, Egyptian, &c.
	Babylon conquered by Cyrus, 538.	
First return of Jews from Babylon, 537.		
Foundation of the Temple laid, 536.	Temple built by Jews at Elephantinê (Yeb)[1], cir. 536.	Rule of Pisistratus, d. 527.
Haggai and Zechariah prophesy, 520.	Reign of Cambyses, 529–522.	Ionian revolt against the Persians, cir. 509.
	Conquest of Egypt by Cambyses, 527–525. He destroys the temples of the Egyptians, but spares the Jewish temple at Elephantinê.[1]	
Completion of the Temple, 515.		
	Pseudo-Smerdis reigns, 522.	Battle of Marathon, 490.
	Reign of Darius I (Hystaspis), 521–486. He invaded Europe cir. 500.	Egypt revolts, but is reconquered by Persia, 488–486.
	Reign of Xerxes, 485–465.	Battle of Thermopylae and Salamis, 480.
		Herodotus and Aeschylus fl. cir. 460.
		Battle of Plataea and Mycale, 479.
	Reign of Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), 465–424.	Revolt of Inaros in Egypt, 462–456.

[1] See Sachau, Aram. Papyri, 13 f.; cf. Sayce-Cowley, *Aram. Papyri.*

JEWISH.	PERSIAN.	GREEK, EGYPTIAN, &c.
Composition of Malachi and Isa. lvi–lxvi (with some exceptions, see below), cir. 460.		
Second return of Jews (under Ezra), 458.		Revolt of Megabyzus in Syria, 448.
Nehemiah's arrival at Jerusalem; reform in social life and the cultus; repairing of the walls, all in 445.		Building of the Samaritan temple on Gerizim, 334–331.
Isa. lviii. 13 f. and Jer. xvii. 19–27, written cir. 444.		Peloponnesian war, 431–404.
The Priestly Codex completed, 440.		Socrates, Sophocles, Aristophanes fl., cir. 420.
Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem, 432.		
Secession of the Samaritan party, cir. 430.	Xerxes II murdered by his half-brother Sogdianus, 424.	
Jews at Elephantinê appeal to Jews at Jerusalem for help to rebuild their temple[1].	Reign of Darius II (Nothus), 423–404.	
The Prophecy of Joel, cir. 404.		Euripides, Plato, Xenophon fl., cir. 400.
Publication of our Hexateuch, cir. 400.	Reign of Artaxerxes II (Mnemon), 404–359.	Defeat of Cyrus II at the battle of Cunaxa, 401.
	He sends his rescript to the Greeks, 387.	Xenophon conducts the 10,000 Greeks back, cir. 400.

[1] See Sachau, *Aram. Papyri.*

JEWISH.	PERSIAN.	GREEK, EGYPTIAN, &c.
	Reign of Artaxerxes III (Ochus), 359–338.	
Jaddua, high-priest at Jerusalem, 351–323.		
EZRA-NEH. completed, cir. 320.	Darius III (Codomanus), 338–331.	
	End of the Persian Kingdom, 331.	Alexander the Great conquers and annexes Persia, 331.
Onias I became high-priest, 323.		Wars of the Romans with the Samnites, 343–290.
		Ptolemy I (Lagos), reigned at Alexandria, 323–285.
Capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I, 320.		
		Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) reigned 285–247.
Antiochus III conquers Palestine, 203.		First (264), second (218), and third (149) Punic wars.
		Treaty of Philip with Hannibal, 215.
Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), tormentor of the Jews, reigned in Syria, 175–164.		First Macedonian war, 210.
The revolt of the Maccabees, 167.		
Jonathan made high-priest by Demetrius, 153.		
Simon succeeding Jonathan as high-priest becomes also prince, 142.		ROMAN.
John Hyrcanus, king from 134.		Tiberius (133) and Caius (123) Gracchus Roman tribunes.
Alexander Jannaeus from 103.		Birth of Cicero and Pompey (106), and of Julius Caesar (100).

The books of ESTHER, Judith 2 Macc., and Jubilees belong to about 100.

ABBREVIATIONS.

1. General.

acc. = accusative.
B.C., in the usual sense, occurs only where there can be any doubt. All the Biblical dates in these volumes are B.C.
fem. = feminine.
Hiph. = Hiph'il.
impf. = imperfect.
impv. = imperative.
masc. = masculine.
Ni. = Niph'al.
pass. = passive.
perf. = perfect.
part. = participle.
Pi. = Pi'el.
prep. = preposition.
pron. = pronoun.
AJSL. = American Journal of Semitic Languages.
COT. = *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the O. T.*, by E. Schrader, translated by O. C. Whitehouse.
KAT.$^{(2)}$ = The third edition of the same (really a new work) by Winckler and Zimmern, 1902.
DB. = Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.
ENCYC. BIB. = Encyclopaedia Biblica (Cheyne).
G. K. = Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, edited by Kautzsch, Oxford, 1898.
PSBA. = Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology.
SDB. = Hastings' small Dictionary of the Bible.

Hiph., Ni., and Pi. denote forms of the Hebrew verb which express (most commonly) the following modifications of the simple idea of the verb (i.e. the Qal): causative, passive, and intensive respectively.

J (Jahwist), E (Elohist), JE (Jehovist), D Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly Writer) stand for the authors of the documents on which the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) is supposed to be chiefly based.

2. Texts and Versions.

1. Hebrew.

M.T. = Massoretic Text. (That of the ordinary vocalized Hebrew Bible.)
SBOT. = Sacred Books of the O. T. (general editor, P. Haupt; Ezra-Neh., edited by Guthe-Batten).
ket. = ketīb. (The consonants and the implied vowels of the Hebrew Bible.)
qr. = qᵉrē. (The text as emended by the Massorites.)
Heb. = Hebrew.

2. Greek.

LXX = The Septuagint.
Aq. = Aquila.
Theod. = Theodotion.
Sym. = Symmachus.
Luc. = The Lucian recension of the LXX: closer to the M.T. than the LXX.
1 *Esd.* = 1 Esdras (Apocrypha). Esdras A of the LXX, 3 Esdras of the Vulgate.

3. Latin.

Jero. = Jerome.
Vulg. = Vulgate.

4. English.

A. V. = Authorized Version.
R. V. = Revised Version.
E. VV. = The above two Versions.
O. T. = Old Testament.
N. T. = The New Testament.

The Arabic (*Saadia*), Ethiopic, and Syriac (Pesh.) versions have been constantly consulted in Walton's Polyglot. For Targum I (Targ.[1]) on Esther Walton's Polyglot and Buxtorf's Rabbinical Bible have been used. Cassel's edition of Targum II (Targ.[2]) has been the one referred to.

COMMENTARIES.

A large number of Commentaries in various languages have been consulted, but below will be found those to which the present writer feels himself most indebted.

Ber. = Bertheau.
Berthol. = Bertholet (in Marti).
Ber.-Rys. = Bertheau-Ryssel.
Guthe-Batten (*SBOT.* for the text).
Jahn, G., 1909.
Kamphausen in Bensen's *Bibelwerk.*
Kautzsch = *Die Heilige Schrift.*
Keil.
Oettli in Strack-Zöchler.
Rawl. = Rawlinson in *Speaker's Commentary.*
Ryle in *Cambridge Bible.*
Schultz in Lange.
Siegfried in *Nowack.*

OTHER LITERATURE REFERRED TO.

See the histories of Jost, Herzfeld[(2)], Ewald[(3)], Graetz[(2)], Stade, Schürer[(3)], Wellhausen[(6)], A. Klostermann, Guthe, the edition used being indicated by the bracketed index number after the name.

Adeney, W. F.: 'Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther,' *Expositor's Bible*, 1893.
Cheyne: *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, 1898.
Geissler: *Die litter. Beziehungen*, &c., 1898.
Hoon. = v. Hoonacker: *Néhémie et Esdras*, 1890; *Nouvelles Études*, &c., 1896.
Howorth, H.: Articles in *Academy* (1893, &c.) and in *Proceedings of Society of Biblical Archaeology.*
Jamp. = Jampel, Sigmund, *Die Wiederherstellung Israels*, 1904. Contains useful matter, but ill digested and often inaccurate.
Kalisch, *Heilige Schrift.*
Kamp. = Kamphausen in Bunsen's *Bibelwerk.*
Kent, C. F.: *The Student's Old Testament*, 1905, &c.
Kosters, W. H.: *Die Wiederherstellung*, &c. (from the Dutch, 1895).
Kuenen-Budde: *Ges. Abhandlungen*, 1894.
Marquart: *Fundamente israelitischer und jüdischer Geschichte*, 1896.
Meyer, E.: *Die Entstehung des Judenthums*, 1896; *Die Geschichte des Alterthums*, Band iii, 1901.

Mommert, C. : *Topographie des alten Jerusalem*, Theile i–iv, 1900–1907.
Nikel, J. : *Die Wiederherstellung des jüdischen Gemeinwesens nach dem babylonischen Exil*, 1900.
Sayce : *Introd. to Ezra-Neh.*, 1885.
Sellin : *Serubbabel*, 1898; *Studien zur Entstehung*, &c. ii, 1901.
Smend, R. : *Die Listen*, &c., 1881.
Smith, G. Adam : *Jerusalem from the Earliest Times to* A.D. 70, 2 vols., 1908.
Smith, W. Robertson : *Religion of the Semites* (2); *The O.T. in the Jewish Church* (2); *The Prophets of Israel* (2); *Kinship and Marriage among the Arabs* (2).
Torrey, C. T. : *Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Neh.* Also articles in *American Journal of Semitic Languages* (1908–9).

NOTATION OF SOURCES (see p. 12 ff.).

T = Temple records.
T_A = Temple records in Aramaic.
C = City records.
C_A = City records in Aramaic.
E = Ezra, autobiographical parts.
C_E = City records dealing with Ezra's work.
T_E = Temple records dealing with Ezra's work.
N = Nehemiah, autobiographical parts.
C_N = City records dealing with Nehemiah's work.
R = Parts due to a Redactor or to Redaction.

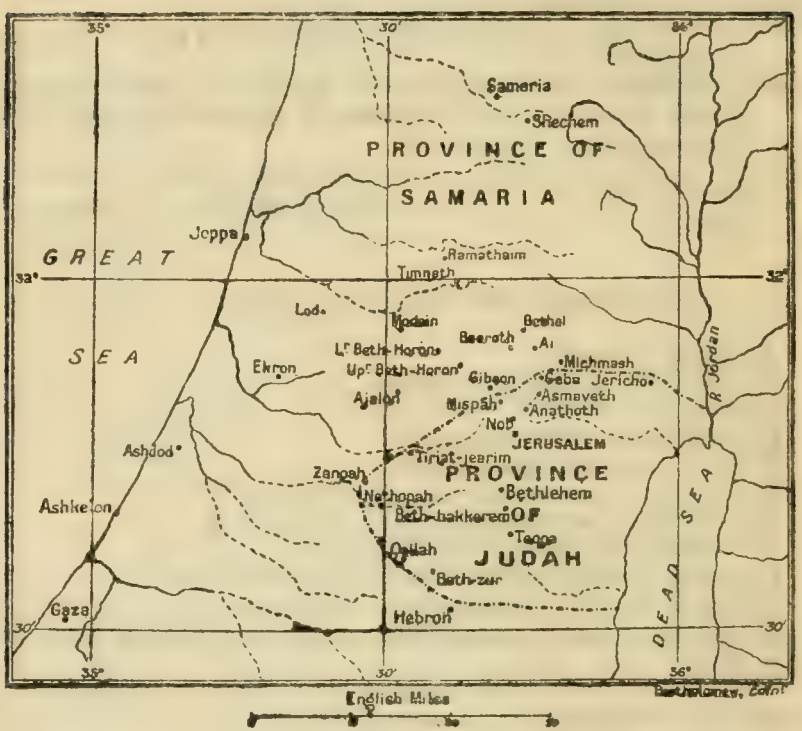
It is assumed that the preceding sources have been all more or less edited by R.

The addition of R to the symbol for a source means that the source has been edited in an unusual degree.

U = Unknown sources.

N.B. When renderings are given words put in brackets are added to make the sense clearer, but are not represented directly in the Heb., though often implied.

PROVINCE OF JUDAH AFTER THE EXILE.



The Persian Province (or Governorship) of Judah, itself a part of the Satrapy of Transpotamia (see on Ezra ix. 8) was subdivided into districts (Heb. *pelek*), of which eight are mentioned in Neh. iii (verses 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19) and a ninth is implied (cf. second half of Beth-zur, ver. 16). There might have been others. Judah and Samaria seem to have been separate provinces, each with its own governor, though at times (as before the advent of Ezra and Nehemiah) the governor of Samaria had jurisdiction over Judah also, as in the case of Rehum (see pp. 85, 170, and 260).

EZRA

I–VI. History of the Return of the First Batch of Exiles from Babylon and of the Events which immediately followed. Date: 538 (first year of Cyrus) to 516.

For analysis of this section see Introd., p. 5, and for a discussion of the sources see Introd., p. 12 ff. It is quite clear that neither Ezra nor Nehemiah had anything to do with the composition of these chapters, the whole of which, with the exception of Ezra iv. 6–23, belongs to a period more than half a century before Ezra appears on the scene.

Ezra i (1 Esd. ii. 1–14). Cyrus authorizes and encourages the Jews of Babylon to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple.

Cyrus (Heb. *Koresh*; Bab. *Kurash*; Pers. *Kurush*) was probably a Persian, and therefore an Aryan, for in an inscription Darius Hystaspis speaks of 'Cambyses, son of Cyrus one of our race.[1]' Both Cyrus[2] and Darius I[3] were descendants of Achaemenes; but Darius describes himself as a 'Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, of Aryan descent,[4]' so that Cyrus must also have been a Persian and an Aryan. Sayce, on the other hand, maintains that Cyrus, as originally king of Anshan (or Anzan) in Elam, was an Elamite; but being king of a province of Elam is no proof of Elamite nationality (see Sayce, *Records of the Past*, 2nd series, v. 144 ff., and *DB.* 'Cyrus'). Cyrus is called also King of Babylon, of Sumer, and of Akkad. There is, however, no certainty where exactly Anshan was, though, since de Morgan's discoveries, Assyriologists agree that it bordered on Susa and Southern Babylonia. If of Elamite origin, Cyrus was by upbringing a polytheist; if of Persian origin he would be a Zoroastrian, and as such well disposed to that policy of toleration of other religions which we rightly connect with his name.

When king of Anshan he overcame the Persians, becoming king of both Anshan and Persia. With his augmented forces he marched against the Medes, now greatly weakened through attacks by Lydians and nomad tribes of Scythian race. He now aimed at augmenting his kingdom and securing its greater safety by adding to his conquests that of Babylon. Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, had estranged his subjects in the provinces by his policy of removing the local gods to Babylon, just as Hezekiah had given offence to his country subjects by a similar policy in Palestine (see 2 Kings xviii. 22); religious centralization being in both cases regarded as the prelude to political centraliza-

[1] See the Behistun inscriptions, i. 10.
[2] *Records of the Past*, ix. p. 67. [3] Ib., p. 79, &c. [4] Ib., p. 75.

tion. Babylonians were on the whole glad to welcome Cyrus and his forces, knowing as they did that the 'great King' allowed and even encouraged every people to worship their ancestral gods and to continue the worship and sacrifice which had come down to them.

Cyrus and his army entered Babylon without opposition in 538, though according to Greek writers (the Babylonian priest Berosus, Xenophon, &c.) the Babylonians resisted and fought to the last.

The historicity of the edict of Cyrus has been generally questioned or denied, as by Kosters, Guthe, Torrey, and Cheyne, who hold that there was no return under Cyrus ; and also by many who admit that such a return took place, as Wellhausen, Renan, Bertholet. It is said by Kosters and others that those parts of Ezra which ascribe to Cyrus the decree referring to the return from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple are inventions of the Chronicler to confirm what is said of Cyrus in Isa. xli. 25, xliv. 28, xlv. 1, &c. Cf. Joseph., *Antiq.* xi. 1. 2. But why, then, does not the Chronicler make Cyrus concern himself about the rebuilding of the city walls as well as the Temple? Moreover, it is said that the Chronicler ascribes to Cyrus his own sentiments, making the Persian king a follower of Yahweh, deeply solicitous about the interests of Judaism and its institutions. But recently discovered cuneiform inscriptions have taken off the edge of this objection, for in them Cyrus speaks the language of the peoples he conquered. Thus, when writing for Babylonians he says that the god Marduk had called him to be king, and he ascribes his success in war to the other Babylonian deities Bel and Nebo. What Cyrus is made to say of Yahweh in Ezra i. 2 is very strange until we find it and much else that in the narrative surprises us matched in inscriptions which have come down to us (see p. 14 f.).[1] The Chronicler may be regarded as using here and generally in Ezra-Nehemiah older, and in the main reliable, sources.

It was the policy of the kings of Babylon to deport conquered people and to replace them by loyal subjects from the near territory. It was the policy of Cyrus and of his successors to encourage each subject race to retain its ancestral faith. Assuming that Cyrus was a Zoroastrian, he might see in the gods of other religions nothing more than the one supreme good spirit, Ahura Mazda, who manifests himself in fire and light; in that case the seemingly compromising language of ver. 2 and of many of the inscriptions would but represent the king's broader conceptions and wider faith. See further on vi. 1–12.

[1] Note how in the third Sachau papyrus Bagohi (Greek *Bagoas*), the Persian governor of Judah, in granting the request of the Jews at Yeb, speaks of Yahweh as the 'God of heaven' and promises that the Temple shall be rebuilt and the sacrifices restored.

[T] Now in the first year of [a] Cyrus king of Persia, that 1
the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be
accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus

[a] Heb. *Coresh.*

1-4. *The edict of Cyrus.* See 1 Esd. ii. 1–7. In Ezra vi. 3–5 we have another version, perhaps the very words preserved in Aramaic in the temple archives: see on these verses.

1–3*a* agree almost verbatim with the last two verses of Chronicles: see Introd., p. 4.

1. Now: in Heb. the particle usually translated 'and.' Its presence here is no necessary proof of an original connexion between this verse and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. The so-called 'waw consecutive' forms became independent tense inflexions implying in many cases no connexion with what has gone before. See A. B. Davidson, *Syntax*, § 47.

first year of his rule over Babylon, i.e. 538. It was the twenty-first year of his reign over Anshan. The inscriptions show that Cyrus reckoned his reign from Nisan after he conquered Babylon.

king of Persia: though this title is most commonly used after the Persian kingdom had ceased to be, i. e. after 331, yet it occurs in the contemporary Cyrus inscription, column 24, and is not therefore necessarily a proof of late date. In their memoirs Ezra and Nehemiah have simply 'the king,' e.g. Ezra vi. 14, vii. 27 f., &c.; Neh. i. 11.

by the mouth of Jeremiah: the reference is to Jer. xxix. 10, where Yahweh promises at the end of seventy years to restore his exiled people. Assuming that the exile commenced in 606, the seventy years would expire in 536, which may be the **first year** referred to in this verse, reckoning from the time when Darius the Mede ceased to exercise joint rule with Cyrus. But we have here to do probably with a round number.

accomplished: lit., 'come to an end.' The Hebrew word (rendered 'finished') is used also in Dan. xii. 7, of the fulfilment of prophecy. God's predictive word ceases, as such, when the event foretold has come to pass.

(the Lord) stirred up the (spirit of Cyrus): lit. 'awakened,' 'roused'; the same verb in ver. 5, 2 Chron. xxi. 16, and in Jer. xli. 11. The Chronicler ascribes Cyrus's resolve to permit the Jews to return to Divine suggestion. Such is also the view taken by the post-exilic prophet, the 'great unknown,' in Isa. xlv. 13. Josephus (*Antiq.* xl. 1. 1 f.) says that Cyrus was prompted by his reading of those parts of ii Isa. in which his name and predicted work appear: see Isa. xliv. 28, xlvi. 1; cf. xli. 28. The name by which Cyrus designates Yahweh = 'Yahweh (Israel's own God who is identical with the) God of heaven'

king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout
2 all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, Thus
saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth
hath the LORD, the God of heaven, given me; and he
hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem,
3 which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all

(the God whom, as seen in the sun, &c., I as a Mazdaist worship). See for the title 'God of heaven' v. 11 f., vi. 9 f., vii. 12, 21, 23; Neh. i. 4 f., ii. 4, 20. This designation occurs in the Sachau Papyri: see i. 2, 28, &c. It is found also in Persian inscriptions.

made a proclamation: lit. 'he caused (a herald) to pass (the) message': the expression occurs in post-exilic literature only: see x. 7; Neh. viii. 15; 2 Chron. xxx. 5; Exod. xxxvi. 5 (P). See on viii. 21.

2. All the kingdoms, &c.: it has been objected that Cyrus could not have used such language, and that the words are those of the Chronicler. But in cuneiform inscriptions Cyrus expresses himself in a very similar way concerning the principal Babylonian god Marduk, who had called him when king of Anshan to be 'king of the world.' See column 12, 'Cyrus-cylinder.' 'Marduk called Cyrus and led his hosts towards Babylon.' 'Without fighting or bloodshed Marduk brought him to his city Babylon.' 'I, Cyrus, am king of the world, the great king, the mighty king,' &c. To Bel and Nebo (see Isa. xlvi. 1; Jer. l. 2) he ascribes much of his success. It is unscholarly and unfair to look at what is said of Cyrus and by him in the O. T. without also considering his general attitude towards nations whom he had subdued and the contemporary language in which he is made to express himself in inscriptions which must have received his sanction.

he hath charged me to build him an house: Cyrus is represented in more than one inscription as restoring to their original homes or temples the local gods brought by Nabonidus to Babylon; this would involve a restoration also of the local shrines. He is also made to say 'I left the gods of Sumer and Accad uninjured according to the command of Marduk my great lord.'

3. Render freely: 'Whoever there is of His (Yahweh's) people among you (my Persian subjects) [that is minded to depart] may his God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, that he may build (= rebuild) the house of Yahweh, Israel's God, that is the God whose special abode is in Jerusalem.'

Whosoever . . . people: i. e. whatever exiles from the Southern Kingdom. Cyrus could hardly have in his mind or have any knowledge of the Northern Israelites deported into Assyria, &c., by Sargon. His concern is with the restoration of

his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD, the God of Israel, [a] (he is God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever is left, in any place where 4

[a] Or, *he is the God which is in Jerusalem*

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the exiled people of Judah and the rebuilding of the temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Yet there is reason for believing that some exiles of the northern tribes returned with those from the south: see 1 Chron. ix. 31 and on ii. 3. As ver. 3 stands, Cyrus commands all Jewish exiles scattered in his dominions to return. We know that the great majority elected to remain in their new home and were not hindered from doing so. We must no doubt add to the commencement of ver. 3 the words in square brackets above; they occur in 1 Esd. ii. 3 (L Codex) and are adopted by Guthe (*SBOT.*), Bertholet, and others. See for confirmation ver. 5.

(his God) be (with him): in the parallel passage 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23 we have, 'his God will be' (LORD = Yahweh is a textual error) 'with him.' So the LXX in the latter and in the present passages.

(**he is God**), &c.: omit the brackets and render as above. Yahweh's temple has to be in Jerusalem, for it is there He has chosen to make Himself specially known to His elect people. So the Hebrew accents, the R.V., and the versions, including 1 Esd. ii. 5, though the Arab. has 'the house of the God of Israel, the God who is in the sanctuary'; and *Luc.* omits the phrase. If the E.VV. be adhered to, the sense is that the 'house of Yahweh . . . is in Jerusalem.' The former is the likelier view. The worshippers of Yahweh were under an obligation to re-erect the Jerusalem temple, for He dwelt on Mount Zion. See Ps. ix. 11, lxxiv. 2, lxxvi. 2, and cf. Psalms, vol. ii (*Century Bible*), additional note on *Zion*. In ver. 4 and elsewhere, however, the phrase 'which is in Jerusalem' (the same Hebrew words as here) describes 'the house of God,' and Ryle, &c., prefer this sense (retaining the brackets) here. Perhaps the bracketed words are the marginal gloss of a pious reader or copyist.

4. This verse may be thus paraphrased: 'Whoever is to be left behind in the place where he dwells (because he lacks the necessary means, though he has a mind to return to Jerusalem), let his fellow-countrymen in that place help him,' &c. Josephus (*Antiq.* xi. 1. 1) says many Jews preferred remaining in Babylon with their property. The verse is generally interpreted (so Ryle, &c.) to mean 'if a Jew living in any part of the Persian dominion has the mind but not the means to return, let his non-Jewish fellow-

he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God which
5 is in Jerusalem. Then rose up the heads of fathers'

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citizens supply him with all that is indispensable for the journey'; and Neh. i. 2 and Hag. ii. 3 are adduced in support of this rendering. But it is the context that decides the shade of meaning to be given to a word in any given place. No king would give such a command as this, and if he did his subjects would not obey, Babylonians or others. One might gather from Neh. v. 1 that the returned exiles were not much helped by non-Jewish people.

is left: in Hebrew a pass. part. such as frequently has a gerundial force: 'Whoever would have to be left behind' (if not helped).

sojourneth: the verb = to settle in a country not one's own and to have substantially the rights of natives: see on Ps. cxix. 19 (in this Series).

place: probably = Jewish quarter, either part of a city in which Jews dwell together (ghetto), or a part of the country cultivated by them, as may be found now in Russia. If town or city were meant a suitable word would have been employed. **The men of his place** = his fellow residents in the same Jewish quarter or locality.

help: the Hebrew verb is the intensive (*Pi.*) form of the verb = to lift up, and has here the sense to support, to aid, as in viii. 36; Esth. ix. 3; 1 Kings ix. 11.

silver and . . . gold: to purchase food, &c., during the journey.

goods: camp-baggage, articles of furniture such as were necessary. The same word occurs in viii. 21; x. 8, and in Gen. xiii. 6. Guthe read the cognate word found in Esth. viii. 8, 10, rendered in the E.VV. 'swift steeds,' but meaning post or saddle horses; so *Luc.* and 1 Esd. ii. 6.

beasts, meaning animals for carrying the baggage (pack-horses, mules, camels, asses).

freewill offering: i. e. gifts of money, &c., towards the expense of rebuilding the Temple: see viii. 28; 2 Chron. xxxi. 14. The same word is used of gifts towards the building and furnishing of the tabernacle in Exod. xxxv. 29; xxxvi. 3. We are not to understand here (with Bertholet) free willing offerings such as even non-worshippers were allowed to present as sacrifices in the Temple. See Schürer (3), ii. 300 ff. (E.V. ii. i. 299 ff.) and cp. the act of Alexander the Great in sacrificing at Jerusalem.

5–7. *Many Jews avail themselves of the offer of Cyrus and return.*

5. Render, 'Then arose the heads of the fathers' [houses] of

houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. And 6
all they that were round about them strengthened their

Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, and all whose spirit God had stirred up to build Yahweh's house (the Temple) which is in Jerusalem.'

the heads of fathers' houses: the word 'houses' is understood in the Hebrew, and must be supplied in English. The full phrase occurs in Exod. vi. 14. A Jewish tribe was divided into families (or clans), each family (or clan) was subdivided into houses.

Judah and Benjamin: according to the older tradition Judah and Judah alone constituted the Southern Kingdom (see 1 Kings xi. 13, 32, 36; xii. 20; but in the latter passage the LXX has 'Judah and Benjamin'). Though Jerusalem was in Benjamin, and some Benjamites must at the disruption have sided with the Southern Kingdom and been merged in it, yet as a whole Benjamin was joined with Israel. We have here the later tradition which made the Southern Kingdom, and therefore the returned exiles, consist of these two tribes—Judah and Benjamin: see also 1 Kings xii. 21 and 23, and Ezra x. 9.

1 Esd. ii. 8 has 'families' for houses, which, as coming after 'tribes', is more suitable and was perhaps the original word.

the priests, and the Levites: according to Deuteronomy all Levites are priests: see p. 18.

even (all): render, 'and.' The Hebrew word (*l*) is usually construed as a preposition with the meaning 'to.' If kept it is what is called the 'lamed of the norm,' defining and limiting what precedes, viz. 'those heads of houses (or families), priests and Levites whose heart.' &c. But we should probably read with the versions, including Esd. ii. 8, the conjunction 'and' (*waw*). Not only the three classes enumerated but 'all whose hearts,' &c. But this addition implies that of the classes named only those are meant who were similarly moved by God.

to build: i. e. here to rebuild: see Neh. ii. 5.

the house of the LORD (God): the Chronicler's common designation for the Temple: see iii. 4, 8; vi. 22.

6. all . . . round about: i. e. the Jews who elected to remain: see on ver. 4.

strengthened their hands: render, 'helped them': so *Luc.*, Vulg., and 1 Esd. ii. 9, as against the LXX, Syriac, Arabic, which render the Hebrew literally. The same phrase with a slight difference occurs in vi. 22; Neh. vi. 9. Cf. Isa. xli. 15, where the simple, not as here the intensive, form of the verb is used.

hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and
with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was
7 willingly offered. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the
vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar
had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in
8 the house of his gods; even those did Cyrus king of

vessels of silver: read and render 'with every kind of thing, with silver,' &c.: so *Luc.*, 1 Esd. ii. 9. The difference in the Hebrew is slight. The vessels are not mentioned before ver. 7. But the M.T. is supported by the other versions.

goods . . . beasts: see on ver. 4.

precious things: the same word is found in 2 Chron. xxi. 3, xxxii. 23; Gen. xxiv. 53. The enumeration in ver. 4 has nothing corresponding to this, and it is likely that its presence here is due to textual corruption. 'Gifts' is the rendering of the LXX, Syriac, Arabic. Perhaps we should read and render 'freewill offerings according to the wealth of the person who made a freewill offering.'

beside, &c.: see above.

7–11. *Cyrus restores the temple, vessels taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.*[1]

7. **vessels**: these had been removed from the Jerusalem temple on three different occasions, viz. when in 597 Jerusalem was conquered in the reign of Jehoiakim—the most valuable, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7; in the end of 597 when Jehoiachin was made prisoner, 2 Kings xxiv. 13; and 587, in Zedekiah's reign, 2 Kings xxv. 14 f. Here the first are more particularly and perhaps exclusively meant.

Nebuchadnezzar: see on ii. 1 and Esther ii. 6.

house of his gods: for **gods** substitute 'god' as in Dan. i. 2, though the Hebrew admits of both. Marduk (Merodach), the principal deity of Babylon, is the one meant. Only one temple is mentioned: had 'gods' been intended we should have had houses' (= temples). In Dan. i. 2 the same phrase is explained (perhaps in a marginal gloss) as 'the treasure house of his god,' i. e. a part of the temple where records, money, &c. were preserved (see *DB.* 'Treasury'). See Neh. x. 38. In *Luc.* and 1 Esd. ii. 10 we have 'idol-temple,' the (one) word used in 1 Cor. viii. 10. In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7, the phrase is 'his (the King's) palace' (not temple as the E.VV.: in Chron. the word *haykal* has its original Assyrian meaning 'palace' and no other).

8. Render, 'So Cyrus, King of Persia, having brought them

[1] The Jews had no images of gods to be restored as was the case with other peoples who had now come under Cyrus's sway.

Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince

forth (from the temple treasury) delivered them into the charge (*lit.* hand) of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them,' &c.

by the hand: in the *Luc.* and in 1 Esd. i. 11 a verb precedes, 'gave' (*Luc.*) or 'deliver' (1 Esd.), and it is to be restored with Guthe, &c., to the M.T., and the whole phrase rendered as above.

Mithredath: a Persian word meaning 'dedicated to Mithra' (the Persian sun-god). The same name appears in Roman history (cp. Mithridates, King of Pontus).

the treasurer: i. e. the person in charge of the treasure-house. See on v. 17.

Sheshbazzar: a Persian official, though a Babylonian by race, as his name (= *Shamash-bal-uṣur*, i. e. Sun-god protect the son[1]) suggests. Previous to the victories of Cyrus this man had probably been a high official of the Babylonian government, and so besides having an intimate acquaintance with the royal treasures he would have a large knowledge of Jewish people with whom he must have had to do. He seems to have been appointed to execute the King's decree in the first instance, to hand over moneys, temple vessels, &c., to divide the territory, and to make the first general preparations for the rebuilding of the temple. Having performed these preliminary tasks, he probably returned to Babylon, leaving the control of things to his successor Zerubbabel, who was a Jew, and in the direct line of descent from David, for he was grandson of Jehoiachin, King of Judah (1 Chron. iii. 17). Both Sheshbazzar (Ezra v. 14) and Zerubbabel (Hag. i. 1, &c.) are called 'Governor of Judah,' the same Hebrew word being used. Had our records not been so scanty, many of them being lost, we should have been informed of the circumstances under which Zerubbabel, the Jew, succeeded Sheshbazzar, the Babylonian. We know that Zerubbabel was the governor in 520, when through the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah the rebuilding of the temple was resumed. Moreover, Zerubbabel was one of those who came with the first batch, see ii. 2, so that he was a contemporary of Sheshbazzar, and at first probably a subordinate official. In Greek the name appears variously as *Abassaros* (Joseph. x. 1. 3); *Sassabassaros*, &c. (LXX): *Sabasare* (*Luc.*); Sanabassar (1 Esd. ii. 15, &c.). Imbert, Renan, Kosters, and E. Meyer identify him with Shenazzar, son of King Jeconiah (= Jehoiachin), see 1 Chron. iii. 17 f. In that case he was Zerubbabel's uncle and also a Jew. But there is no evidence of that identity; not a word in accounts of either to suggest relationship with the other.

[1] So Fried. Del., v. Hoonacker, and Sayce. E. Meyer (*Die Entstehung, &c.*, 76 f.), however, and others, reading Shenazzar (Sanabassar) identify with *Sin-bal-uṣur*, i. e. 'O Sin, protect the son.'

9 of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty
chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and
10 twenty knives; thirty bowls of gold, silver bowls of a

That Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are but two names of one individual is assumed by Joseph. (*Antiq.* xi. 1. 5), and by the author of 1 Esd. (see vi. 18), and is the view held generally in former times (Ewald, &c.) and, to a considerable extent, at present (Ryle, &c.). The tendency of later writers is to make the two names stand for two men: so Renan, Kosters, Stade, Kuenen, Wellhausen, Cheyne, Meyer, Klostermann, Guthe, and Siegfried. In favour of this is the fact that two names are used, both of them common Babylonian names, not as was formerly thought one Hebrew and the other Babylonian; and that in ch. v. (cp. verses 2, 15) a distinction is clearly made. Yet it must be admitted that the evidence is not very decisive either way. Kuenen[1] thinks Sheshbazzar never was governor, the passages stating or implying that he was being inaccurate. But this is to make history, not to construct it out of existing materials.

9. chargers: render 'libation cups,' the original word, occurring here only in the O.T., seems to be a loan-word from the Greek *κάρταλλος* 'a basket,' unless the Greek word comes from a similar one with a similar meaning in Semitic (Arabic, Aramaic, Ethiopic), or from the Persian. Basket-shaped libation cups are what is probably meant: see 1 Chron. xxviii. 17: they were used for pouring forth the drink offering: cp. Exod. xxv. 29. This is the rendering of 1 Esd. ii. 13. The LXX and *Luc.* translate 'wine coolers,' referring to the shape probably. Perhaps the word has a more general sense and includes also the 'basons' used for dashing sacrificial blood against the altar. See 1 Chron. xxviii. 17; 2 Chron. xxix. 22.

knives: render 'censers': the word in M.T. occurs nowhere else, and the sense is for that reason indeterminate, though the root in this case has the appearance of being Semitic if not Hebrew. The original text had probably the Hebrew word for 'censers' found in 1 Kings vii. 50, 2 Chron. iv. 22: this does not differ much from the M.T., and it is implied in 1 Esd. ii. 13, though Syr., LXX, and *Luc.* have 'changes' (of garment), a sense suggested by the root of the Hebrew word which = to change.

10. bowls: so 1 Esd. ii. 13 (*phiale*). Etymology (which is, however, uncertain) suggests the meaning 'covered' or 'lidded vessel,' 'tankard': but the sense of the word and the purpose of the vessel implied are obscure. The LXX and *Luc.* transliterate. Rashi and Ibn Ezra say that the word has here the same sense as that translated 'basons' in 1 Chron. xxviii. 17.

[1] *Ges. Abhandlungen* (Budde), 220 f.

second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five 11
thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

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second sort: it is almost certain that the Hebrew word is a corruption of some numeral: 1 Esd. ii. 13 has 'two thousand,' making in all two thousand four hundred and ten bowls. The other versions have 'double' (LXX, *Luc.*) or 'second' (Vulg.). Rashi and Ibn Ezra agree with the E.VV. But silver bowls would, as such, be different from gold ones, and analogy shows that no other difference is intended. The last part of the word in the M.T. agrees with the last part of the word for 'two thousands' in unpointed Hebrew, and by substituting this the difficulty in reconciling the details of the numerals with the sum total is diminished: see below.

The numerals in verses 9–11. If the numbers of the various vessels named in ver. 9 f. are added together they reach a sum total of 2,499; but in ver. 11 it is said that the sum total reached is 5,400. Many attempts at reconciliation have been made, but no one has commanded or deserves much confidence. Keil thinks the mistake lies in the sum total and not in the details, 5,400 being written for 2,500 by a transposition of the 5. But we have even then 2 for 4, and since the exact numbers are given for the items we should expect the same to be done for the summing up. Besides, all the versions practically agree in the total (1 Esd. ii. 14 has 5,469), though they differ somewhat in the items. For thirty chargers of gold 1 Esdras has 'one thousand,' and it has 2,410 bowls instead of the 410 found in M.T. and in the remaining versions. If these two changes are introduced into the Hebrew text we get the same total as in 1 Esdras, viz. 5,469. Perhaps here as elsewhere the Apocryphal Ezra preserves the true text, unless we are to see in it a harmonistic recension. The corruption in the M.T. is ancient, since the versions except 1 Esdras follow the M.T.

On the face of it the numbers in ver. 9 f., as given in the M.T., &c., are more plausible. One might expect the number of gold vessels to be fewer in each case than the number of silver ones. In 1 Esdras there are one thousand chargers of both gold and silver. On the other hand, 2,400 silver bowls (ver. 10) are very many in comparison with thirty of gold.

The gap between chaps. i *and* ii. It is strange that after informing us in chap. i in general terms of the departure from Babylon the historian should tell us nothing about the march, its commencement, the line of route, incidents of the journey, when

and under what circumstances the arrival took place, how long the journey lasted, &c. It does seem as though a section of the book dealing with these and kindred matters has been lost, and it is not unlikely that Ewald, Bertheau, Ryssel, Sellin, and others, are right in seeing a fragment at least of that section, though in a mutilated form, in 1 Esd. i-v. 1-6. These verses are in the style of chap. i, and bear clear traces of translation from a Hebrew original. Moreover, in their present setting they are out of place, and an evident interpolation inserted to connect the legend of the contest between the three young men (1 Esd. iii f.) with the narrative resumed in 1 Esd. v. 7. Darius's name has been inserted in place of the original Cyrus to make the piece fit in with the two preceding chapters. As amended by Bertheau (who omits the whole of ver. 5) these verses read as follows:

'1. Afterwards the chiefs of fathers' houses were chosen to go up according to their tribes, together with their wives, sons, daughters, menservants, womenservants, and their cattle. 2. And Cyrus (not Darius) sent along with them a thousand horsemen, to bring them back in safety to Jerusalem, with musical instruments, tabrets and flutes. 3. And all their brethren played, and he caused them to go up with them together. 4. And these are the names of the men who went up, according to their families, to their tribal possessions into their several districts; 6. in the second year of his reign, in the month Nisan which is the first month' (or, 'on the first day of the month').

A glance at the map (see opposite title-page) will show that the route lay first of all NW. towards Carchemish, then turned SW. and S., thus avoiding the almost untraversable regions of the Syrian and Arabian deserts (see p. 169 f.). It took Ezra and his companions four months to compass the same journey, and it would require more rather than less time to cover this distance now, as the way would be less familiar and perhaps less safe. If we accept the above addition to Ezra i it will be seen that the security and enjoyment of the travellers were well seen to, as the latter were accompanied by horsemen and musicians. It should be added that Schrader, Reuss, Ryle, Bertholet, and others object to filling up the gap between i and ii from 1 Esdras.

II (see Neh. vii. 6-73[a] and 1 Esd. v. 7-45). List of those who returned in 538.

After giving a description of the royal edict authorizing the return to Jerusalem of as many of the exiles in Babylon as had a mind to go, it was natural to add an account of those who availed themselves of the offer thus given, their clans, the townships to which before the exile their families belonged, together with statistical information regarding the number of laymen,

Temple officials, &c., who joined in the procession. Besides, the privilege accorded by Cyrus was confined to *bona fide* Jews, and it is natural to think that this list was drawn up in Babylon, according to older lists, so that it might be known who had a right to join the returning band, though in cases of genuine doubt the side of those making the claim seems to have been favoured, see verses 59-63. Notwithstanding the fact that the list belongs primarily to this period it bears marks of having been edited in later times. It is not to be doubted that the records of kings and their reigns, including genealogies, &c., were kept in the Temple archives at Jerusalem; and when the Babylonians conquered the city they are likely to have carried them to Babylon to be deposited in the Babylonian archives. Among the precious things which Cyrus returned to the Jews when he became their king, one may include as many of these old records as could be found. These would be helpful in drawing up the lists in Ezra ii and Neh. vii.

The persons mentioned in this chapter belong to the following classes.

1. *The twelve leaders*, including Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Though in Ezra ii. 2 only eleven are named, it is evident from the paralleled list in Nehemiah, 1 Esdras, and from other considerations, that originally there were twelve names. Ewald and others see rightly in this a desire on the part of the Jews to preserve the number twelve in their national organization. They were now but two tribes, but they were guided and governed by twelve princes.

2. *The laymen*: verses 3-35, || 1 Esd. v. 5-35, Neh. vii. 8-38.

(1) Reckoned by clans, verses 3-19. The Hebrew phrase is literally 'sons of,' which means 'belonging to,' or, 'of the clan of,' 'Parosh,' &c.: see on ii. 41.

(2) Reckoned by original (or present actual?) abode of the clan: verses 20-35.

3. *Temple officials*: verses 36-57, || 1 Esd. v. 24-35; Neh. vii. 39-60.

(1) Priests: verses 36-39.
(2) Levites: ver. 40.
(3) Singers: ver. 41.
(4) Porters (gate-keepers): ver. 42.
(5) Nethinim: verses 43-54.
(6) Solomon's servants: verses 55-58.

4. *Those of doubtful Jewish descent*: verses 59-63, || 1 Esd. v. 36-40; Neh. vii. 61-65.

(1) Laymen: ver. 59 f.
(2) Priests: verses 61-63.

Meyer (*Entstehung*, p. 160) contends that those of undoubted Jewish descent belonged to the tribes of Judah or Benjamin (see on, xi. 3-24, 25-36); but there is nothing in Ezra-Nehemiah about tribes. In the strict sense they had long ceased to exist.

5. *Men and women servants*: ver. 65, || 1 Esd. v. 41; Neh. vii. 67.

Following the above we have a statement of the sum total of the persons and of the beasts of burden (verses 64–67), and an enumeration of the gifts which the persons brought with them for the Temple (ver. 68 f.).

This list occurs not only in this chapter and also in the parallel section in 1 Esdras, but also in a different context in Neh. vii; though, however, the sum total (42,360, see Ezra ii. 64) is the same in all the three lists, there is considerable divergence as to names and the detailed numbers. In no case do the separate items when added up reach the above sum total. If we add together the number given of the several classes (laymen, &c., verses 3–65) we reach the following results:

In Ezra 29,818.

In 1 Esdras 30,143.

In Nehemiah 31,089.

Learned and ingenious attempts have been made to reconcile these figures with each other and with the sum total in which all the three accounts agree. But the disagreements are no doubt due to errors of copying, easily understood and commonly met with where numbers are concerned. The divergences do not touch any matter of principle, and as the space in this series of commentaries is necessarily so limited it is impossible to give here such parallel lists of names and numbers from the three sources (Ezra, Esdras, Nehemiah) as may be seen in the larger commentaries and such as any reader can easily compile for himself. Important divergences will be discussed in the verses where they occur. It may be added that the clearest and fullest comparative tables of the various name-lists of Ezra, Esdras, and Nehemiah are to be found in Rudolf Smend's still very interesting and valuable *Die Listen der Bücher Esra und Nehem.* (Basel, 1881). The proper names are given, however, in Hebrew and (in 1 Esdras, &c.) in Greek.

The following brief general remarks are all that can be found room for here:—

1. Personal Clans: verses 3–19. The clans, families, or houses of Ezra ii. 3–19 are subdivisions of tribes called after persons who are supposed to have founded them, though we know but little of most of the persons named. Since they occur in a similar order here, in viii. 1–4, x. 18–44, and in Neh. vii, x. 1–27, we may infer that they are mentioned in the order of honour, though this is purely a subjective inference, and it may be weakened by the fact that the places in the next part of the list occur also in a uniform order.

The names of many of the men after whom the clans are designated here occur in later lists (see above), from which it may be concluded that they are not names of *persons* who accompanied Zerubbabel and his party.

It seems almost certain that the clans mentioned in these chapters existed in Babylon, and even in the period before the exile. We are not to suppose that all the members of the clans came away in 538, leaving no representatives in Babylon. The contrary was undoubtedly the case, and in favour of this is the statement in Ezra viii. 13 that with Ezra the final batch of the Adonikam clan arrived leaving none behind them: see Ezra ii. 13, which says that 666 men of the clan came with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem.

2. Local Clans: verses 20–35. Some clans seem to have been designated according to their original homes, and it might be permitted to call these local clans, though the name is a new one and carries with it the writer's opinion that the Hebrew phrase 'sons of' or 'men of' a village or town has the same sense as 'sons of' a man, i.e. it denotes a clan. In ii. 27 f. and in Neh. vii. 26–33 the common phrase is 'men of' (cf. 1 Esd. vi. 18–21). Guthe holds that wherever 'clans' are meant the phrase 'sons of' was originally prefixed; the phrase 'men of' denoting the people of a district. See *SBOT.* 26 ff. He therefore attaches ii. 29–32 and 35 immediately to Ezra ii. 19, as they describe clans. But 'men of' = 'sons of' in Hebrew, both phrases meaning 'belonging to,' &c. And in the verses which he would remove, most, if not all, of the names are place-names. It is noteworthy that the places enumerated are nearly all in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. Ewald (v. 88; Germ. iv. 104) held that the original decree of Cyrus authorizing a restoration referred only to Jerusalem and the neighbourhood close to it, the rest of Judah being held by the Edomites (see Mal. i. 4; Obadiah). But nowhere in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah are the Moabites mentioned as foes of Judah; and moreover, among the places are some not very near to Jerusalem, as e. g. Bethel, Ai.

3. Lay and Clerical. From Ezra ii and Neh. vii (cf. Neh. ix. 38) it may be concluded that the lay element took precedence over the clerical, being named first. We have a confirmation of this in the order Zerubbabel-Joshua in every instance of the two names coming together (about 12) except one (Ezra iii. 2).

In the later form of the lists in Ezra viii, x and Neh. x members of the clerical class come first, suggesting that in the course of the century following the first return there was a gradual increase of clerical influence.

The number of Levites who came with Zerubbabel and with Ezra was relatively small, though in the time of Nehemiah some of them occupied important positions (see Neh. iii. 17 ff.).

The high-priesthood is but seldom spoken of or implied in these books: see, however, p. 114 f.

As regards the origin and value of the lists in Ezra ii and Neh. vii opinions may be arranged as follows:—

1. That these and the other lists in Ezra and Nehemiah are due to the vivid imagination of the Chronicler, who compiled them on the bases of some real genealogies to fill up the picture which he paints of the return under Cyrus and the restoration of religious institutions before the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. So Torrey (*The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah*), Wellhausen, and others. In reply note—

(1) The same list is used on two different occasions, viz. Ezra ii and Neh. vii.

(2) That in Neh. vii the list occurs as part of the Nehemiah memoirs, which are about the most certainly genuine portion of the two books.

2. The bulk of Old Testament scholars accept the list as authentic.

According to the old and the majority of modern commentators and historians, the primary place of the list is in Ezra ii. This is what the natural reading of the text suggests, and it is so suitable in this connexion that it is better to adhere to this view unless there are insuperable obstacles in the way. The list is taken up in Neh. vii because it was needed for the purpose of ascertaining who could trace their descent from the first returned exiles. This is the view defended by Keil, Bertheau, Ryssel, Baudissin, Budde, &c.

Many recent scholars maintain that the original place of the list is in Neh. vii as part of the memoirs of Nehemiah, and that it has been misplaced in Ezra ii, where it has no proper connexion with what precedes or what follows. So Graetz, Kosters, Lord A. J. Harvey, Guthe, E. Meyer, and Sellin. Lord Harvey states the case for this view fully and clearly in the *Expositor*, 1893, vol. iii. 431–42; but his arguments do not carry conviction to the present writer. They are chiefly that in Neh. vii the list fits in well—I hold it suits in Ezra ii: that the Tirshatha in Ezra ii. 63 can mean no other than Nehemiah, which is exactly the opposite of the truth: see on that verse.

Moreover, the animals mentioned in Ezra ii. 66 are suitable in the connexion there implied; they are horses, mules, camels, and asses, such as would be needed for the journey to carry persons and baggage. In Neh. vii we should have expected the mention of animals for food and for sacrifice if the list belongs primarily to that chapter.

In 1 Esd. v. 4 the list is given as if those who went up to Jerusalem from Babylon did so in the reign of Darius (i. e. Darius Hystaspis, 521–486). This is no doubt to reconcile the chronology of this chapter with the interpolated passage about the contest between Darius's three pages (iii f.).

[a] Now these are the children of the province, that went 2
up out of the captivity of those which had been carried
away, whom [b] Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had
carried away unto Babylon, and that returned unto Jeru-
salem and Judah, every one unto his city; which came with 2

[a] See Neh. vii. 6, &c. [b] Heb. *Nebuchadnezzor.*

1–2. Heading to the List.

1. children of the province: in Semitic 'sons' (the word here employed) is used for 'people belonging to.' The **province** is that of Judah (see ver. 8; Neh. i. 3, xi. 3), now a sub-satrapy of Transpotamia (see on Esther i. 1), having Jerusalem for capital and Sheshbazzar and afterwards Zerubbabel for governor. Here the reference is to natives of that province taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, who now, as far as living, together with their descendants, accepted the king's offer and left for Jerusalem.

captivity: the Hebrew word, though abstract, is used for the community of Jews in exile in Babylon, though the bulk of these now in Babylon had been born in that country. This chapter tells of as many of the Babylonian Jews as came with Zerubbabel in the time of Cyrus. Very many preferred remaining in their adopted home. Of course those who with Kosters and Cheyne deny there was any return under Cyrus, are compelled to explain away this verse and its context.

Nebuchadnezzar: RVm. 'Heb. Nebuchadnezzor,' which may also in unpointed Hebrew have been the spelling in i. 7, where the M.T. has final *ar*, as in the E.VV. (cf. LXX *Nabuchodonosor*). In the original Babylonian the form is *Nabu-kudurri-usur* (='O Nebo protect the boundary'), with which corresponds more nearly the form *Nebuchadrezzar* found in parts of Jeremiah and throughout Ezekiel. In late Hebrew *r* and *n* often interchange (cf. *bar*=*ben*=son).

Jerusalem and Judah = the capital and the rest of Judah, the former named separately on account of its importance. The common phrase is, however, 'Judah and Jerusalem': see iv. 6, v. 1, vii. 14, &c. In Neh. vii. 6 the order is as in this verse.

every one unto his city: i. e. the city to which his clan belonged. The words must, however, be understood freely, and with reference to a later time when the account was written; what is stated here was actually done as far as was and became practicable.

In Neh. vii. 7 and in ‖ 1 Esdras twelve leaders are mentioned, and not eleven, as here. It is probable that Nahamani has fallen out of this verse through a copyist's mistake. As to the number twelve, see remarks introductory to this chapter, p. 51.

Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, [a] Seraiah, [b] Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, [c] Mispar, Bigvai, [d] Rehum, Baanah. The
3 number of the men of the people of Israel: the children of
4 Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two. The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.
5 The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.
6 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua

[a] In Neh. vii. 7, *Azariah*.
[b] In Neh. vii. 7, *Raamiah*.
[c] In Neh. vii. 7, *Mispereth*.
[d] In Neh. vii. 7, *Nehum*.

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2. Zerubbabel: not yet governor: he is but one of twelve leaders. Sheshbazzar was governor during the journey and for some time after. The name, which means 'seed' or 'offspring of Babylon,' is a common Babylonian one, as the inscriptions show. He was son of Shealtiel according to iii. 2; Hag. i. 1, 12, 14, ii. 2, and Matt. i. 12. But in 1 Chron. iii. 18 f. he appears as son of Pedaiah, brother of Shealtiel. Perhaps Shealtiel died without issue and his brother Pedaiah, contracting a Levirate marriage with his sister-in-law, became the father of Zerubbabel, who would, however, be reckoned, according to the law, son of Shealtiel. See further on v. 1 f., and as to Zerubbabel's descent on 1 Chron. iii. 19 in *Century Bible*.

Jeshua: called Joshua (the older form) in Hag. i. 1, &c.; Zech. iii. 1, &c. In Neh. viii. 17 the well-known Joshua, son of Nun, is called by this (in Hebrew the shorter) name. He was son of Jehozadak and grandson of the high-priest Seraiah: see 1 Chron. vi. 14 f. (Heb. v. 40 f.) and 2 Kings xxv. 18 ff. Though high-priest, he and Zerubbabel formed with the other ten a kind of cabinet of equal leaders, who had during the journey and immediately after its completion to decide on matters of consequence, subject to the supreme authority of Sheshbazzar, the governor.

Nehemiah: not, of course, the man best known by that name. Cf. Neh. i. 1. This was, and is, a common name among the Jews.

Mordecai: probably identified by the author of Esther with the Mordecai of that book (see on Esther ii. 5, 6). But the name (= votary of Marduk) was and is a common one among Jews, notwithstanding its idolatrous origin.

people of Israel: i. e. the lay portion of the population. In late Hebrew the common designation for the unprofessional class is 'the people of the land.' The word 'Israel' (for Judah) is used to imply that the tribes to which the exiled belong represent the totality of God's chosen people.

3–19. *Personal clans.* See preliminary remarks, p. 52 f.

6. **Pahath-moab**: lit. 'the governor of Moab,' because perhaps

and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve. The 7
children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.
The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five. The 8, 9
children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. The 10
children of [a] Bani, six hundred forty and two. The chil- 11
dren of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three. The 12
children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and
two. The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and 13
six. The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six. 14
The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four. The 15, 16
children of Ater, of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. The chil- 17
dren of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three. The 18
children of [b] Jorah, an hundred and twelve. The chil- 19
dren of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three. The 20
children of [c] Gibbar, ninety and five. The children of 21
Beth-lehem, an hundred twenty and three. The men of 22
Netophah, fifty and six. The men of Anathoth, an 23

[a] In Neh. vii. 15, *Binnui.* [b] In Neh. vii. 24, *Hariph.*
[c] In Neh. vii. 25, *Gibeon.*

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the founder of the clan, or he after whom the clan was named, held the position of governor of Moab in earlier days.

12. Azgad: the number here is 1,222; in ‖ 1 Esd. 3,222; in Neh. vii, 2,322. The discrepancy is due apparently to wrong copying.

13. Adonikam: a part only of this clan came with Zerubbabel; the part that remained joined Ezra's party: see viii. 13. In Neh. x. 16 the name appears as Adonijah.

20–35. *Local clans*: see preliminary remarks, p. 53. Local clans are designated 'son of' such and such a place. In ver. 27 f. the phrase is 'men of,' as it still more frequently is in Neh. vii (see verses 26–33).

20. Gibbar: read 'Gibeon,' as in Neh. vii. 25. The modern village, *El-Jîb*, about five miles north-west of Jerusalem, stands on the same site and preserves in a corrupt form the ancient name. See Josh. ix. 3 f.; 1 Sam. ii; 1 Kings iii. 4, &c.

22. Netophah: a priestly city according to 1 Chron. ix. 16; generally identified with the modern *Beit Nettef*, about a score of miles to the west of Bethlehem.

23. Anathoth = the modern *Anâta*, a village about four miles

24 hundred twenty and eight. The children of [a] Azmaveth,
25 forty and two. The children of [b] Kiriath-arim, Chephirah,
26 and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three. The children of Ramah and Geba, six hundred twenty and
27 one. The men of Michmas, an hundred twenty and
28 two. The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty
29, 30 and three. The children of Nebo, fifty and two. The
31 children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six. The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty

[a] In Neh. vii. 28, *Beth-azmaveth.* [b] In Neh. vii. 29, *Kiriath-jearim.*

north-east of Jerusalem. Jeremiah was born at Anathoth (Jer. i. 1, xi. 21). See Neh. xi. 32.

24. Azmaveth: see Neh. xii. 29; in 1 Chron. viii. 36 the name of a person belonging to the house of Saul. Perhaps the place was named after the person. In Neh. vii it is called 'Beth-Azmaveth.' It has been identified with El-Hismeh, an eminence to the north of Anâtâ.

25. Kiriath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth were Gibeonite cities (Josh. ix. 17) lying to the north of Jerusalem.

26. Ramah = the modern *er-Râm*, some six miles to the north of Jerusalem. It was the home of Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 17).

Geba = the modern *Jeba*, some dozen miles north of Jerusalem, a priestly town in the territory of Benjamin. See Josh. xviii. 24, xxi. 17; Neh. xi. 31, xii. 29.

27. Michmas: a fortified town in Benjamin, seven miles north of Jerusalem, identified with the modern hill *Mukhmas*. See Neh. xi. 31.

28. The sites of **Bethel** (now *Beitin*) and **Ai** (to the east of it) are well known; they are about one and a half miles apart and some dozen miles north of Jerusalem. See Neh. xi. 31.

29 ff. Guthe (*SBOT.*) would place verses 29–32, 35 immediately after ver. 19, but without sufficient reason. See on 'local clans,' p. 53.

29. Nebo: called in Neh. vii. 33 'the other Nebo' to distinguish it from the Moabite town of the same name (Num. xxxii. 3. 38), though the word 'other' is omitted in Nehemiah by the LXX (Siegf.). We do not know where the Nebo of the present verse was, though some have identified it with the modern Isawiyeh, a village north of Jerusalem. The same place is mentioned in x. 43.

31. the other Elam: the Elam of ver. 7 seems to be a person. It is singular that the personal clan of ver. 7 has the same number

and four. The children of Harim, three hundred and 32
twenty. The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven 33
hundred twenty and five. The children of Jericho, three 34
hundred forty and five. The children of Senaah, three 35
thousand and six hundred and thirty. The priests: the 36

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as the local clan of this verse, viz. 2,254. Probably ver. 7 was by a copyist's mistake repeated here, and then, to try and give it sense, the word 'other' was prefixed. We have the same apparent duplication in Neh. vii. 12, 33. 1 Esdras omits the second mention of Elam altogether, following probably a text in which ver. 33 was lacking.

32. Harim: another town (ver. 39) bore the same name.

33. Lod = Lydda (Acts ix. 32, &c.), about seven miles from Joppa on the way to Jerusalem, now called *Lud*. It is not mentioned in pre-exilic parts of the O.T., but is named in the Palestinian list of Thothmes III.

Hadid = the Apocryphal Adida (1 Macc. xii. 38, xiii. 13). It was a fortified city on the east of the Shephelah, now called *El-khadithah*.

Ono: a village somewhat to the north of Lydda. Its modern name is *Kefr Ana*.

Lod and **Ono** are named together, as here, in 1 Chron. viii. 12; Neh. vii. 35, and xi. 35. Neither is mentioned elsewhere in the O.T.

34. Jericho: now called *er-Riha*; about nineteen miles from Jerusalem due east, some two miles west of the Jordan, near to where that river debouches into the Dead Sea.

35. Senaah: since the inhabitants of this place assisted in the building of the walls of Jerusalem one may conclude that it was near to Jerusalem and five miles to the north of Jericho, as Eusebius and Jerome held, identifying it with the *Magdalsenna* of their day. See Neh. iii. 3 ('Has-sennah' = 'the place called Sennah').

36–57. *Temple officials.* Among those who returned we read of priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinim, but no separate reference is made to high-priests, and that probably because no such class existed until after the exile. (In 2 Kings xii. 10 and xxii. 4, 8, xxiii. 4, the word 'high' is an interpolation, as the context proves.) In Ezra-Nehemiah the epithet 'high-priest' is used of Eliashib only (see Neh. iii. 1, 20, xiii. 28), though 'high-priest' for 'priest' in Ezra ii. 63 and Neh. vii. 65 would suit well. The first undoubted occurrence of the expression 'high-priest' is in the Books of Haggai (i. 1, &c.) and Zechariah (iii. 1, &c.), where it is applied to Joshua, the 'Jeshua' of Ezra and Nehemiah (see on ver. 2). The omission in the present context of any mention of

children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred
37 seventy and three. The children of Immer, a thousand
38 fifty and two. The children of Pashhur, a thousand two
39 hundred forty and seven. The children of Harim, a
40 thousand and seventeen. The Levites: the children of

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a high-priest is an incidental confirmation of the truth of the story told and of the suitability of the list in Ezra ii.

36-39. *Priestly clans.* The four priestly clans of these verses represent probably the state of things in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the time of the Chronicler (see 1 Chron. xxiv) these four classes had by subdivision and perhaps incorporation expanded into the twenty-four courses, and in the manner of this historian these courses are traced all the way back to David, some seven hundred years before his own time!

36. The Jedaiah clan formed the second of the twenty-four courses enumerated in 1 Chron. xxiv (see ver. 7).

of the house of Jeshua: for the form of the name see on ver. 2. The sense and the rhythm of verses 36–39 support the view of Smend and Bertholet that this clause is a late addition to be rejected. It has caused endless trouble to commentators, no two of whom (if independent) seem agreed as to its meaning. If retained this Jeshua cannot be the high-priest of that name, for he has been mentioned in ver. 2; but the founder of a large class of priests, one which embraced the clan Jedaiah.

37. Immer appears in 1 Chron. xxiv. 14 as sixteenth of the courses.

38. Pashhur son of Immer according to Jer. xx. 1. No course of that name is mentioned in 1 Chron. xxiv.

39. Harim: another clan of the same name is mentioned in ver. 32. See Neh. iii. 11. In 1 Chron. xxiv. 8 it is mentioned as the third course. In Neh. vii. 40–42 the order Immer, Pashhur, Harim is as in the present section, but in Ezra x. 20–2 the order is Immer, Harim, Pashhur.

40–58. *Levites and their subordinates.* It is to be borne in mind that the term 'Levites' does not necessarily or even probably go back to an historical personality; Levi is never spoken of in the O.T. as an actual individual but once, viz. in Gen. xxxiv. And it is the fortunes of the tribe that appear to be here portrayed under the name of its eponymous head; as is also the case with Simeon in the same chapter. In Gen. xlix. 5–7 the same events are connected with the names Levi and Simeon, though in this case it is made quite clear that the tribes are meant.

In the early period of Israel's history the priesthood was not

confined to any one tribe, see Judges xvii, xix. In 2 Sam. viii. 18 David's sons are priests.

With the introduction of the Deuteronomic legislation the priesthood came to be restricted to a guild or class called the 'Levites,' so that priests and Levites came to be synonymous, see Deut. x. 8 f., xviii. 1 f.; 1 Kings xii. 31. The Deuteronomic legislation, involving the suppression of the local sanctuaries scattered up and down the country, meant the disestablishment of the priests who officiated at these sanctuaries. Deut. xviii. 6–8 (cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 18) enacts that these priests on coming to Jerusalem are to be received into the Temple priesthood and to share its status and emoluments. For some unexplained reason (perhaps so many priests were not required), these country priests were not allowed to act as city priests, though they shared the revenues of the office (see 2 Kings xxiii. 8 f.). It is in Ezek. xl. 45 f. that we have the earliest distinction between the priests 'who kept the charge of the house' and the priests, the Zadokites, who of the Levites are those 'who approach Yahweh and minister to Him.' From Ezek. xliv. 9–14 we gather that the Levites were believed to have been guilty of idolatry, though the high places were as much Yahweh shrines as the Jerusalem Temple. As a punishment they are degraded and permitted to perform those lower offices only of the Temple which had been previously performed by foreigners, such as keeping the gates, slaying the animals for sacrifice, &c. In Babylon, where in the absence of the Temple no sacrifice could be offered, the distinction between these originally city and country priests would tend to be obliterated. Moreover, in the presence of a common foe, politically and religiously, all Jewish parties were likely to cling together. One may from this understand the reluctance of the Levites to leave Babylon for Jerusalem, where their priestly inferiority would be emphasized and made manifest. Hence only seventy Levites returned with Zerubbabel, as against 4,289 priests (Ezra ii. 36; Neh. vii. 43); and only thirty-eight Levites accompanied Ezra (Ezra viii. 15–19). So in Nehemiah's time there dwelt in Jerusalem 1,192 priests, but only 204 Levites, including the singers (Neh. xi. 10 18).

In the P code the inferiority of the Levites to the Zadokite priests is a recognized principle. In this code the latter are dignified with the name Aaronites, the inferior Levites not being now regarded as priests proper at all. See Driver on Deut. xviii. 6–8 and the references there given. See also *DB.* 'Priests' (Baudissin). It has been mentioned by Graf and most later writers that in all the older sources used in Ezra-Nehemiah singers and porters are treated as classes outside the Levites, but that the Chronicler himself includes all under the general name 'Levites': see Smend, *Listen*, 26; Baudissin, *Priestertum*, 142 f., and also *Einleitung*, p. 288, where he answers Torrey; Torrey, *Composition*, &c., 22 f.

The facts of the case may be thus briefly stated.

1. It is in post-exilic writings of the Old Testament that we first read of 'singers,' 'porters,' and 'Nethinim,' as distinct classes of Temple servants.

2. In certain parts of Ezra-Nehemiah and of Chronicles it is implied that 'singers,' 'porters,' &c., stand outside the Levites, so that they are named separately; see Ezra ii. 40–42, 70, vii. 7, 24, x. 23 f.; Neh. xi. 10 ff., xiii. 5, 10 ff.; 1 Chron. ix. 10 ff. (cp. Neh. xi. 10 ff., which is almost identical), xv. 16 ff., xxiii–xxvi. Köberle and v. Hoonacker deny the above statement, maintaining that in the books named above the singers, &c., appear as Levites.

3. In other parts of Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the Levites seem to be a general class including in it the subordinate Temple officials named, singers, &c., as in 1 Chron. ix. 33; Ezra iii. 10; Neh. xi. 17–22, xii. 8, 24, 27; 2 Chron. v. 12, and in the genealogies in 1 Chron. vi. 16 f. Cp. Ezra ii. 41.

The porters are never formally identified with the Levites, though in 1 Chron. xxxiv. 9 we read of the 'Levites who kept the doors'; but see 2 Kings xii. 9 (cp. xxv. 18), where we read of '*priests* who kept the door.' Ezek. xliv. 11 seems to show that even non-Israelites could act as door-keepers. But in 1 Chron. ix. 26 the four chief porters are Levites, and in the genealogies the porters are clearly traced to Levitic families, as are the singers, see 1 Chron. xxvi. 1 (the porters are Korahites, i. e. Levites; cp. 2 Chron. xx. 19, &c.). The Chronicler assigns to the singers a very important part in the cultus; see 2 Chron. viii. 14 (cp. 1 Chron. xx. 16), xx. 19 ff., xxix. 25 ff.

Now in the P code there are priests and Levites and no others, the latter term having a broad sense which includes all the lower officials. Ezekiel has but two orders of Temple officials, though the Aaronites are for him Zadokites and the Levites degraded priests. It is under the influence of Ezekiel's programme and of P that in later Hebrew writings, biblical and non-biblical, the term Levite came to have the wider meaning of all Temple officials other than the priests. This is the conception assumed in the Apocrypha, in the writings of Josephus, and also in the Talmud, which last ascribes to the Levites the two functions, song and watching, in the Temple.

Ezra-Nehemiah, and especially Chronicles, are made up of elements representing different stages of religious practice and law; so that it is useless to seek for one uniform set of usages in them. Thus in parts of Chronicles we meet with the D phrase 'the priests the Levites,' see 2 Chron. v. 5, xxiii. 18, xxx. 27; and Levites are made to perform priestly acts; see 2 Chron. xxix. 34, &c.

It may be added that modern Judaism follows the P code with its implied usages.

Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of [a] Hodaviah, seventy and four. The singers: the children of Asaph, an 41
hundred twenty and eight. The children of the porters: 42
the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, in all an hundred thirty and nine. The Nethinim: the children of Ziha, the 43

[a] In ch. iii. 9, *Judah.* In Neh. vii. 43, *Hodevah.*

40. Render, 'the Levites: the descendants of Jeshua and (also) of Kadmiel who were of the descendants of Hodaviah,' &c. That the proper names Jeshua and Kadmiel connote families rather than individuals is proved by their recurrence in Neh. x. 9 among those who sealed the covenant in the time of Nehemiah. The same remark applies to the other names.

of the children of Hodaviah: this clause belongs to the descendants of Kadmiel alone; these formed a branch of the descendants of Hodaviah; see on, iii. 9.

Hodaviah: in Neh. vii. 43 Hodevah; in Ezra iii. 9 Judah (a textual error).

41. singers: the earliest mention of a distinct class of singers, though, according to 1 Chron. xv. 17–24, David was the founder, see p. 11 and on iii. 10.

the children of Asaph: better Asaphites. We do not read of any members of the Heman and Jeduthun musical guilds. The word 'children,' lit. 'sons,' must not be understood in the Western sense. 'Son' in Semitic means having the property of, thus a 'son of wisdom' is a 'wise man'; or belonging to, thus 'sons' (children) of Asaph denotes persons of the Asaph guild. No person called 'Asaph' can be traced.

an hundred twenty and eight: in Neh. vii. 44 one hundred and forty-eight.

42. The children of the porters: read 'porters,' or better 'gate-keepers': see on last verse. In Neh. vii. 45 we have simply 'the porters.' See vii. 7 on porters ('door-keepers' in the R. V. of 1 Chron. xxvi. 1). See general note to verses 40–58. Cp. Ps. lxxxiv. 10. The proper names stand for classes, not individuals. See 1 Chron. ix. 17 and Neh. xi. 19.

43–54. *The Nethinim.* We do not read of this class of Temple servants outside the books of Ezra-Nehemiah except in 1 Chron. ix. 2 The word 'Nethinim' means 'given' or 'devoted to,' i. e. to God. Their non-Israelitish origin is suggested by their foreign names. According to Jewish tradition they are identical with the Gibeonites whom Joshua appointed to be assistants to

44 children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth; the
children of Keros, the children of [a] Siaha, the children of
45 Padon; the children of Lebanah, the children of Haga-
46 bah, the children of Akkub; the children of Hagab, the
47 children of [b] Shamlai, the children of Hanan; the children
of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah;
48 the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the chil-
49 dren of Gazzam; the children of Uzza, the children of
50 Paseah, the children of Besai; the children of Asnah,
51 the children of Meunim, the children of [c] Nephisim; the
children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the chil-
52 dren of Harhur; the children of [d] Bazluth, the children of
53 Mehida, the children of Harsha; the children of Barkos,
54 the children of Sisera, the children of Temah; the chil-
55 dren of Neziah, the children of Hatipha. The children
of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the chil-
56 dren of [e] Hassophereth, the children of [f] Peruda; the
children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children
57 of Giddel; the children of Shephatiah, the children of

[a] In Neh. vii. 47, *Sia.* [b] In Neh. vii. 48, *Salmai.*
[c] Another reading is, *Nephusim.* In Neh. vii. 52, *Nephu shesim.* [d] In Neh. vii. 54, *Bazlith.*
[e] In Neh. vii. 57, *Sophereth.* [f] In Neh. vii. 57, *Perida.*

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the Levites (see Joshua ix. 3–27), but Ezra viii. 20 makes David their founder. Many other theories of their origin and functions have been put forth. Has the word any connexion with Nathan, the name of the well-known high-priest?

55–58. *The children of* (i. e. the people who are) *Solomon's servants*: mentioned in conjunction with the Nethinim also (as here) in Neh. vii. 60, xi. 3. They are usually regarded as descendants of the Canaanitish tribes conquered by Solomon (see 1 Kings v. 13), but really nothing certain is known of them or of the Nethinim except that they assisted the Levites. Baudissin (*Priesterthum*, 142 f.) thinks the words 'the children of Solomon's servants' is simply an explication of Nethinim, 'even the children of Solomon's servants,' but there are two distinct lists which show that distinct classes are intended.

Hattil, the children of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the children
of [a] Ami. All the Nethinim, and the children of Solo- 58
mon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two. And 59
these were they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-
harsha, Cherub, [b] Addan, *and* Immer: but they could not
shew their fathers' houses, and their seed, whether
they were of Israel: the children of Delaiah, the chil- 60
dren of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred
fifty and two. And of the children of the priests: 61
the children of [c] Habaiah, the children of Hakkoz, the
children of Barzillai, which took a wife of the daughters
of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their

[a] In Neh. vii. 59, *Amon.* [b] In Neh. vii. 61, *Addon.*
[c] In Neh. vii. 63, *Hobaiah.*

59-63. Those whose claims to be Israelites and priests were doubtful. We have here a good illustration of the exclusiveness of post-exilic Judaism. Though however these families failed to make good their claims they were allowed to return with the rest, but their names do not occur in the lists of Ezra x. 25-43 or of Neh. x. 15-28.

59 f. *Doubtful Israelites who returned.*

59. The proper names in this verse stand for places in Babylon, though whether cities, districts, &c., or where they were situated, we do not know. None of these names belong to persons, as these last are enumerated in the next verse. Some join Cherub-Addan-Immer; thus making the number of places three, corresponding to the three clans of the next verse.

fathers' houses: the clans or tribal subdivisions: see Neh. i. 2, 18, &c.

their seed: their line of descent. They could not show to what clans they belonged or that they were truly of Israel at all. See Ps. xxii. 31; Jer. xxiii. 8.

60. Nekoda: the same name appears among the Nethinim (ver. 48). Perhaps this family sought to be enrolled among the full Israelites.

61-63. *Doubtful priestly families.* Such as claimed the rights of the priesthood without being able to prove their priestly descent.

61. Habaiah: in Neh. vii. 63 'Hobaiah,' the difference being due probably to a copyist. Baer in his Hebrew text writes both alike.

Hakkoz: see 1 Chron. xxiv. 10.

Barzillai: see 2 Sam. xvii. 27, xix. 32-39; 1 Kings ii. 7.

62 name. These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore [a] were they deemed polluted and put from
63 the priesthood. And the [b] Tirshatha said unto them,

[a] Heb. *they were polluted from the priesthood.* [b] Or, *governor*

A wealthy Gileadite not of priestly family, but a daughter of whom married a priest, retaining for her family the name for the sake of the inheritance. The descendants of such a marriage could not rightly claim the priestly office.

62. Render: 'These sought for the record (lit. writings) of themselves among those enrolled in the genealogies; but it was not found: therefore were they pronounced polluted (i. e. ceremonially unclean) (and so) excluded from the priesthood.'

their register: lit. 'their writing'; the Hebrew word is a technical one for the roll of Israelites, priests, &c., which had probably been kept in the Temple archives from the ninth century B.C. onwards. See Ezek. xiii. 9.

among (those, &c.): not in the Hebrew, but to be restored here and in Nehemiah. It is hard, if not impossible, to make sense of the Hebrew without this preposition, and the change in the Hebrew is very slight (*b* for *h*).

they (were not found): read, 'it' (the writing) 'was,' &c., as in Neh. vii. 64.

polluted: i. e. not of pure priestly descent. There is no allusion to personal moral disqualification. Of course their exclusion from the priesthood was not necessarily final: with full proof of the soundness of their claims these doubtful priests would be reinstated; and a similar statement applies to the doubtful Israelites.

63. Tirshatha: should be written *Tarshatha* according to the Persian original word which is a passive participle = 'feared,' 'revered'; so Meyer, Siegfried, Bertholet (not as Lagarde 'the king's representative'). It is not an official title, but an epithet of respect (cf. 'your excellence') applied to noblemen and high officials. Here, and in Neh. vii. 65, 70, it is applied to Sheshbazzar, but in Neh. viii. 9 and x. 2 wrongly to Nehemiah, who is called *pekhah* (= governor) in Neh. xii. 26. It used to be thought that *tirshatha* has in Persian the same technical sense that *pekhah* (governor) has in Babylonian; but no Persian scholar has ever said or thought this. That Nehemiah is not the person here meant is proved by the fact that he himself found the list in which the person thus designated is mentioned; and besides, the power exercised by the *tirshatha* here as regards the priesthood corresponds to the authority given to Sheshbazzar (see i. 8).

that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim. The 64

that they should not eat, &c.: that they should not act as priests; to these last alone was it permitted to partake of the shew-bread and of certain parts of what was offered: see Lev. ii. 10, vi. 18, 26, vii. 6, 31–34.

the most holy things: what priests alone were allowed to eat. See Num. xviii. 9–11.

till there stood up, &c.: these priestly claimants of doubtful genealogy were to refrain from acting as priests until another high-priest should arise with power to obtain oracles from God by Urim and Thummim: he would be able to decide as to the validity or otherwise of the claims put forth by these men.

Urim and Thummim: an ancient Hebrew method of seeking by lot the will of God, employed by the high-priest alone. The following rendering of 1 Sam. xiv. 41 f., based on a text amended in accordance with *Luc.*, makes it exceedingly likely that *Urim* and *Thummim* stand for two stones on which alternative answers were written (yes, no, &c.), and which, being placed in a pocket attached to the high-priest's ephod, one of them was drawn, the word on it constituting the answer sought: 'And Saul said, O Yahweh the God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant, this day? If the iniquity be in me or in Jonathan my son give Urim; and if thou sayest thus: the iniquity is in the people, give Thummim' (Driver, *in loco*). We have ten other obvious examples in the O. T. in which God was consulted by lot: see Jonah i. 7 ff., &c. Many other explanations of *Urim* and *Thummim* have been given. Josephus (*Antiq.* iii. 8. 9) and the Rabbis generally identified *Urim* and *Thummim* with the twelve precious stones, which, according to P (Exod. xxviii. 17 ff.), were inserted in the high-priest's breastplate and which in some mysterious way indicated the Divine Will: so Kalisch (see on Exod. xxviii. 30). But *Urim* and *Thummim* had to be put into the pocket of the breastplate, and the names suggest two not twelve stones. Spencer, Hengstenberg, and others, derive the custom of divining by two stones from Egyptian models. Some (J. H. Michaelis, Gesenius, &c.) have held that three stones were used, one for an affirmative, another for a negative, and a third for a neutral answer; but the evidence is against this.

The Rabbis say that in the second Temple five things were lacking which were present in Solomon's Temple, viz. the Ark, the Holy Fire, the Oil of Anointing, the Shechinah, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Urim and Thummim. It is, however, implied in Josephus, *Antiq.* iii. 8. 9, and Sir. xxxvi. 3 (EV. xxxiii. 3) that the high-priest had the power of Urim and Thummim down to Maccabean days. If Joshua were now high-priest why

whole congregation together was forty and two thousand
65 three hundred and threescore, beside their menservants and their maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two

had he not this power? Probably he had not yet entered fully into office; and, in any case, it was believed immediately after the return that no one could receive Divine intimations in this manner.

'Urim' (LXX 'revelation,' Vulg. 'teaching') means 'lights' (so Sym., Theod.) or 'great light,' plur. of intensity: 'Thummim' (LXX 'truth') means 'perfections' or 'great perfection,' plur. of intensity. The sense of the words has, however, been variously explained.

64–67. Sum total of the people and of the animals. On the apparent contradiction between the details and the sum total of those who returned, see p. 52. Several futile attempts at reconciliation have been made, such as that the total includes members of the ten tribes who returned with the others. But either we have here three distinct traditions with editorial harmonizing in the sum total, or divergences in the items—a more likely explanation. The existence of three different traditions would be a confirmation of the general facts, though it would be an argument against the idea that contemporary written archives were preserved.

64. According to 1 Esd. v. 41 the total given includes those above twelve years old only, from which J. D. Michaelis, following Jewish commentators, infers that the separate statements refer to those above twenty years of age; he thus accounts for the divergences in the detailed numbers and the sum total. But even then he fails to account for the divergences in the details, though they are slight. Others have thought that the sum total includes the women, but that the items do not. So Stade and Meyer.

congregation: the Hebrew word (*qahal*) has a religious connotation, and is especially used of the restored community. The Jews left Palestine a nation; they returned a religious community. In later times the word stood for the pious portion of the people, see Ps. cxlix. 1. Stade, with a view to confirming his contention that Yahwism was essentially a men's religion, says that the *qahal Yahweh* or 'Yahweh's congregation' was made up of men alone, but that he is wrong is proved by Neh. viii. 2; Joshua viii. 35; cp. Deut. xxxi. 12; Ezra x. 1; Joel ii. 16.

65. they (had), i. e. the whole congregation of ver. 64.

two hundred: in Neh. vii. 67 and 1 Esd. v. 42 two hundred and forty-five, a copyist's error due to the presence of the latter number in the following verse.

hundred singing men and singing women. Their 66
horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their
mules, two hundred forty and five; their camels, four 67
hundred thirty and five; *their* asses, six thousand seven
hundred and twenty. And some of the heads of fathers' 68

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singing men and singing women: to be distinguished from the Levitical guild of sacred singers mentioned in verses 41, 70. The singers of this verse are professionals, such as were employed for marriages, feasts, banquets, and the like; see 2 Sam. xix. 36; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; Sir. ii. 7 f.; here they were engaged to relieve the tedium of the journey. The mention of them is a confirmation of the truth of the story of the return. The text has been unnecessarily changed so as to read 'oxen,' omitting 'and singing women' as an addition due to the corruption[1] of the preceding word. There is no external authority for this, and we have abundant attestation of the existence of the singers of verses 41, 70, and of these of the present verse. Löhr[2] holds that this verse proves that immediately after the exile, and probably before it, women formed an essential part of the Temple choir.

66. Number of the beasts: horses 736 (1 Esd. v. 43, 7,036); mules 245; camels 435; asses 6,720; so Neh. vii. 68.

The animals mentioned are only such as would be required for the journey for carrying persons and baggage, an undesigned confirmation of the narrative.

horses: the earliest mention of the use of the horse among the Israelites for purposes other than war.

mules: used in Palestine at present almost exclusively for carrying baggage, but in Bible times they were used by the better-to-do for riding purposes before the horse was so used: see 1 Kings i. 33, 38, 44; Isa. lxvi. 30. They were unknown in Palestine until Solomon imported them.

67. camels would be most valuable for the journey from Babylon on account of their ability to carry great burdens and to endure beyond most animals.

asses would be used by the poorer classes; much less used in Palestine than the horse at the present time, though in Egypt the contrary is the case. The Egyptian deserts suit the ass as the rocky mountains do the horse.

68 f. *Contributions of heads of houses towards the rebuilding of the Temple.* The parallel account in Neh. vii. 70–72 is fuller, but the sum totals of what was given do not agree in Ezra and Nehemiah.

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[1] *A. T. Theol.* i. 147 ff.

[2] *Das Weib in Jahwe-Religion und Jahwe-Kult*, 51.

houses, when they came to the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, offered willingly for the house of God to
69 set it up in its place: they gave after their ability into the treasury of the work threescore and one thousand darics

In the former the heads of houses give 61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 pounds of silver, and 100 priests' garments. In Nehemiah the Tirshatha, heads of houses, and the remainder of the people give in all 41,000 darics of gold, 4,700 pounds of silver, and 97 priests' garments. It is impossible to reconcile these numbers. The discrepancies are due to different traditions or to copyists' errors.

68. heads of fathers' houses: see on i. 5.

for the house of God . . . place: Neh. vii. 70 simply '(gave) unto the work,' the last word standing, according to Wellhausen and Bertholet, for the cultus (sacrificing, &c.) only. This, it is held, is what is meant in the present verse, and the text is accordingly changed so as to make it agree with Nehemiah. But that the word rendered 'work' can denote temple building is proved by iii. 9, Hag. i. 14, &c. Perhaps, however, the contributions here were specifically towards restoring the cultus or worship of the house. See on vi. 4 **to set it up,** Heb. 'to make stand,' i. e. 'to restore,' as in ix. 9.

69. Here the heads of houses give; in Nehemiah the Tirshatha and the rest of the people give as well, though even then the amount reached is smaller than what the 'heads' alone give.

darics: a Persian gold coin of the value of our guinea, deriving its name, according to Bohlenius, Ryssel (Bertheau), &c., from the Persian *dara* (king), and *kama* (bow), so meaning 'king's bow,' a king with a bow being pictured on the coin: see Gesenius, *Thesaurus*, 354[a]; Madden, *Coins of the Jews* (3), p. 48. Modern scholars, however, tend more and more to reject the Persian etymology. As a matter of fact the Babylonian word[1] was used long before the Persians came in contact with the Babylonians. But in any case the derivation from 'Darius' is now universally rejected by scholars. This word seems to be quite distinct in etymology from the word rendered 'daric' in viii. 27 and 1 Chron. xxix. 7, the latter being a Hebraized form of the word in the present verse, from the Heb. root *darak*, 'to bend the bow'; then *darkon* (the Heb. noun) = 'archer.' But it is the same coin that is probably meant, though Meyer thinks we must understand different coins, finding support in the bilingual inscription (Phoenician and Greek) found in the Pyraeus: see *Entstehung*, &c., 196 f.

If the two words rendered 'darics' (*darkemon* and *darkon*) are

[1] *dariku*, used according to Prof. Sayce in the Neo-Babylonian contracts for a kind of measure. The cuneiform lexical tablets make *dariku* = 'a pot.'

of gold, and five thousand [a] pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments. So the priests, and the 70
Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

[b] And when the seventh month was come, and the 3
children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered

[a] Heb. *maneh.* [b] See Neh. vii. 73, viii. 1.

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derived from Darius there arises a chronological difficulty: how could coins used in the time of Cyrus (538-529) be called after Darius (D. Hystaspis, 521-486)? That the older name is used here and the later Hebraized name by Ezra himself (viii. 27) is evidence for the antiquity and authenticity of the list in this chapter.

pound: Heb. *maneh*, Greek *mina*, Bab. *manu*, Sumerian *mana*: a certain value of silver measured by weight, containing fifty shekels, equal to one-sixtieth part of a talent, i.e. about £6 16*s*.

priests' garments: made of fine white linen; see description in Exod. xxviii. 40, xxxix. 27, and cf. 2 Chron. v. 12.

70. *Closing words.* Read and render, 'And then the priests, the Levites, the singers, the porters, the Nethinim, and some of the people (not being Levites) — even all Israel dwelt in their cities.' See Neh. vii. 73. 1 Esd. v. 46 says that the priests, Levites, and lay folk dwelt in and about Jerusalem, but the holy singers, porters, and all Israel dwelt in their villages.

III (1 Esd. v. 47-65). Religious Life of the Nation Resumed: Building and Dedication of the Altar (1-6); Foundation of the Temple Laid (7-10).

1-3. *Building of the altar and sacrificing on it.*

1. See on Neh. vii. 73 f.

seventh month: i. e. of the first year of Cyrus, referring back to i. 1 ('the first year of Cyrus'): see ver. 8. This month, called Tishri, is still the sacred month of the Jewish calendar, for in it occur the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement (10th day), and Tabernacles (15th to 21st), and in later as in pre-exilic times the year began with it: see on x. 16. Howorth, following 1 Esd. v. 6, holds that it is the seventh month of the second year of Darius II (Nothus, 423-404) that is meant (*PSBA.* 1902, p. 336); but this chronology is impossible (see p. 28), and it rests on a legend which is full of improbabilities (1 Esd. iii. 1-v. 6).

in the cities: see ii. 70. The returned exiles were now settled in their respective homes.

2 themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. Then
stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren
the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his
brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to
offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of
3 Moses the man of God. And they set the altar [a] upon its
base; for fear was upon them because of the people of

[a] Or, *in its place*

to Jerusalem: 1 Esd. v. 47 more definitely, 'into the broad place before the first gate which is towards the east': see Neh. viii. 1[a]. The assembly took place in the open space between the water-gate (Neh. iii. 26) and the temple area.

2. Jeshua: see on ii. 2.

his brethren: Jeshua's brethren are his fellow members of the priesthood; Zerubbabel's are the heads of houses (ii. 2, 68).

builded: in the sense of 'rebuilded' as in 1 Kings xvi. 34, Amos ix. 14.

the altar: as the materials of the old altar were probably to hand, and so many workers were engaged, the altar would be speedily completed. As it was of the utmost importance that the religious life of the nation should be resumed, the altar was set up before the Temple was rebuilt.

burnt offerings: such as were offered daily on behalf of the nation. Private offerings, being of less importance, had to wait.

as it is written, &c.: see Lev. i; Neh. x. 35–37; 2 Chron. xxiii. 18, xxxv. 12, where the same expression occurs. All sacrificial regulations are ascribed in post-exilic writings to Moses, musical arrangements to David: see ver. 10, and Proverbs to Solomon (Prov. i. 1).

law of Moses: not the Pentateuch. The Hebrew word here (*torah*) is never once used in the O.T. in the strictly technical sense 'Pentateuch' which prevails in Rabbinical Hebrew. It means strictly 'teaching,' then 'prescribed laws' (see p. 8, n.). The 'law of Moses' in Ezra, Neh., &c. = the regulations about worship in the current code, believed to owe its origin to Moses: see on vii. 6.

3. its base: the same words (with a very slight difference) in ii. 68 are rendered 'its place': see Zech. v. 11. The meaning is that the altar was set up in the place where the former altar stood. The spirit animating the people would lead them to preserve old sites as well as old usages. The Massorites (*q*[e]*rē*) change unnecessarily into the plural 'its bases.'

for fear, &c.: render 'for fear of the peoples of the land came upon them; and so (to secure Divine protection) they

the countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening. And they kept the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, 4

offered,' &c. A very slight change in the M. T. (adopted by Bertholet and Kittel) is required for the above translation. Without some change the Hebrew gives no good sense.

people of the countries: Hebrew 'peoples of the lands' (or 'countries'). We should, however, read 'the peoples of the land,' the plural of the second noun being due to attraction to that of the first. It is possible, of course, that there is in the Hebrew a reference to the various nationalities of contiguous countries (Edom, &c.). Ewald was of opinion that during the exile the Edomites had to a large extent taken possession of South Palestine, but that is an unproved guess. The phrase 'peoples (people) of the land' or 'of the earth' or 'of the lands' seems always to stand for the heathen in contrast with Israel, 'the people.' Its primary reference is probably to the native races of Palestine; but as they were heathen the expression came to stand for heathen in general, an extension of meaning made easier by the fact that the same Hebrew word means 'land' or 'country' and also 'earth.' The sing. 'people' (*'am*) refers nearly always to Israel. See article 'Nation' in Hastings' *SDB.* for use of 'nations' in sense of 'heathen.' Cf. iv. 4 ('people of the land,' see on), ix. 1, &c.; and also Deut. xxviii. 10; Joshua iv. 24; 1 Kings viii. 53, 60.

burnt offerings, &c.: the regulations for the daily sacrifices are given in Exod. xxix. 38–42 (P); Num. xxviii. 3–8 (P).

4–7. Before the Temple was built and regular worship resumed the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and other feasts, offering the appropriate sacrifices on the newly restored altar.

4. they kept the feast of tabernacles: this is apparently at variance with the statement in Neh. viii. 17 that between the time of the observance recorded in Neh. viii. 14 ff. and that of Joshua son of Nun this feast had not been kept; see on the above passage. Even if we assume that this feast was observed on both these occasions it is strange that nowhere else in Ezra-Nehemiah and nowhere at all in the other historical books of the O. T. do we read of the actual carrying out of the laws commanding the feast (see on, Neh. viii. 14). The authenticity of the present passage is denied by making it an invention of the Chronicler, who had a wish to represent the returned Jews as faithful to 'the law of Moses.' See p. 14 f.

Originally the three great feasts were agricultural, and had nothing to do with the events with which in later times they came to be connected; they were simply agrarian feasts during which the people rejoiced at the close of the three harvests (barley,

and *offered* the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the ordinance, as the duty of every day required; and afterward the continual burnt offering, and *the offerings* of

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wheat, and fruit of various kind). The Feast of Tabernacles was an autumnal holiday when the people gathered from villages and towns to great centres, and living in booths enjoyed themselves when the year's hardest work was over. This feast came to be religious, commemorative of the dwelling in tents in the wilderness, only with the inauguration of the Deuteronomical legislation which, as a part of its centralization of worship, made it obligatory to keep the feasts at Jerusalem.

as it is written: see on ver. 2. The reference seems to be to the law recorded in Num. xxix. 12-34 (P), according to which the number of bullocks to be sacrificed on the succeeding days diminished, beginning with thirteen on the 15th of Tishri and ending with seven on the 21st and closing day of the feast. But the various codes do not agree. See G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, p. 402 ff. ('a scale of public offerings'). No details of the manner in which the feast was kept are given in the present chapter.

offered: the verb translated 'kept' is the technical one for 'to offer' (a sacrifice); its force is continued in the present clause and also into the next verse, so that the italics are not needed and should be omitted.

by number, &c.: see the above note.

5-7. *The offering of sacrifices of various kinds resumed.*

5. afterward: after the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles the sacrificial system suspended since the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. was restored. The nation so long religiously dead was beginning to re-live its old religious life.

the continual burnt offering: the daily sacrifices, see Exod. xxix. 38-42; Num. xxviii. 8; Ezek. xlvi. 15. In pre-exilic times the daily sacrifice consisted of a whole burnt offering in the morning and a meal offering in the evening (see 2 Kings xvi. 15; cf. 1 Kings xviii. 29, 36). Ezekiel requires both these in the morning; Neh. x. 33 (34) assumes that both were offered each day, though whether in the morning as Ezek. xlvi. 15, or morning and evening according to the old law, cannot be determined. In later times (see Num. xxviii. 8 (P)) the law required a burnt offering and also a meal offering both morning and evening, though the meal offering was subordinated to the other, as was the drink offering which (last) was never offered alone. See on ix. 5 and on Neh. x. 34 (33).

continual means in this connexion 'daily.'

and the offerings of: since the construction in Hebrew implies the presence of these words the italics are unnecessary.

the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. From the first 6 day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD: but the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid. They gave money also unto 7

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new moons: the observance of this feast (the first day of the month) is not enacted in any of the older codes (JE, D, H) and in P only in Num. x. 19 and xxviii. 11–15. It does not even find mention in the list of feasts in Lev. xxiii. Nevertheless, that the new moon was in early times observed as a festal day and as a day of sacrifice is proved by Amos viii. 5; Hos. ii. 11 (13); Isa. i. 13; 1 Sam. xx. 4 ff.; 2 Kings iv. 23.

In 1 Esd. v. 52 the Sabbath offerings are mentioned before those of the new moons: so 1 Chron. xxiii. 31; 2 Chron. ii. 4.

set feasts: probably here as in Neh. x. 33, 2 Chron. viii. 13 the three great annual pilgrimage feasts are meant, though the expression has a wider sense in Lev. xxiii. 2 (see following verses where they are enumerated).

freewill offering: the aforementioned offerings were made by the community and were compulsory. But each individual was at liberty to make private offerings on the great feast days (see Deut. xvi. 10, 16 f.) or on any other occasions (see Num. xxix. 39). See Lev. i–iii, where they are called 'gifts' ('corbans,' see Mark vii. 11), a word however which in other places includes all kinds of sacrifices, bloody and bloodless.

6. Sacrifice began to be offered immediately the altar was set up, i.e. on the first day of Tishri, the Day of Trumpets (Num. xxix. 1). Yet the regular daily offering was not resumed until the Feast of Tabernacles had been held, i.e. after the 22nd day of the month, three weeks later: see ver. 5.

7. *Preparations for the rebuilding of the Temple.* See the much fuller account of the preparations for building Solomon's temple in 1 Kings v. 7 ff. (Heb. 21 ff.) and 2 Chron. ii. 11 ff. Some say that the present verse is an invention of the Chronicler's, based on the older accounts of the building of the first Temple. But there are differences as well as resemblances; and it should be remembered that the example of Solomon was likely to influence the conduct of Zerubbabel and Jeshua.

money: the native workmen received money; the Sidonians and Tyrians were paid in kind (wheat, wine, and oil); see 1 Kings v. 23.

the [a] masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, unto Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of

[a] Or, *hewers*

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masons: rather 'stone-cutters,' i. e. those who cut the stones into proper shape for building: not builders or 'masons.' Nor does the word stand for those who quarried the stone (from below the city).

carpenters: i. e. those who cut the wood into the shape required for the building; so the Hebrew.

grant: the Hebrew word seems to mean 'permission,' the reference being to the permission given by Cyrus to rebuild the Temple and his promise of help.

8–13. *Foundation of the Temple laid.* Though the work of rebuilding was commenced in real earnest, it seems to have been speedily stopped, not being resumed until the second year of Darius Hystaspis, i. e. in 519 B. C.: see v. 2. Even the foundation-stone was so incompletely laid that the whole proceeding had to be gone through sixteen years later when the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah moved the people to set about the task of rebuilding: see Hag. i. 15. There is no need to assume that there is a contradiction. The first foundation-stone laying was formal and incomplete; at the end of sixteen years those hostile to the undertaking might have undone what had been done. Besides, the Hebrew verb (ver. 10) translated 'to lay the foundation' must not be understood to mean to start a new building *de novo*. To begin rebuilding an old structure would meet the requirements of the case.

8. the second year: i. e. after the return; this would be probably the third year of Cyrus's reign over Babylon.

the house of God, &c. (see ii. 68): i. e. the place where the Temple had been, was to be, and where much of the old building must have remained.

second month: i. e. Iyyar.

began: i. e. the work of rebuilding the Temple; what they began to do is suggested by the context. Some (Keil, &c.) join the verb to **and appointed,** rendering 'began to appoint'; the Hebrew allows this.

Zerubbabel, &c.: see on ii. 2 and also on v. 2. The community which appointed the Levites as overseers of the work

Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to [a] have the oversight of the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua 9

[a] Or, *set forward the work*

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consisted of the civic (Zerubbabel) and religious (Jeshua) leaders, priests, and Levites, and the rest, i. e. the lay portion.

Jeshua: see on ii. 2.

the rest: i. e. all except Zerubbabel and Jeshua.

and appointed: render 'so they appointed.' The verb (lit. to 'cause to stand') is used elsewhere also of appointing to office, as in 2 Chron. viii. 14, xxxi. 2, &c.: see on verses 9, 10.

the Levites: very few of them returned according to ii. 40. They would therefore not be too numerous to act as superintendents of the various departments of the work.

from twenty years old and upward: service agreeing with 1 Chron. xxiii. 27, which refers this arrangement to the time of David, though it is probably what obtained in the writer's own day. Num. iv. 3 (P) gives the years of service as from thirty to fifty, though after that a Levite could help his brethren. Num. viii. 23–26 (P) fixes the age at from twenty-five to fifty. The different figures represent the customs of different times. There is no contradiction between the present verse and Num. iv. 3.

to have the oversight of: not in the LXX (except *Luc.*) which has simply 'appointed . . . over the work,' &c. The verb translated as above is cognate with the word often found in the titles of Psalms (R. V. Chief Musician). These Levites must be understood as having the oversight only as regards the religious use of the structure—sacrifice, the laws of holiness, &c. They can hardly have had the ability or responsibility of seeing to the building, carpentering, &c., as such.

9. What the writer in this verse aims at saying is that the Levites accepted the task imposed on them; but as it stands the verse does not say that, or indeed anything that is intelligible in the light of the text. Probably the Hebrew should be altered slightly and then translated as follows:

'Then Jeshua and his descendants and brethren, Kadmiel and his descendants (who were) descendants of Hodaviah, their descendants and their brethren, (yea, all the) Levites, accepted the appointment, superintending the workmen (lit. 'the doers of the work') at the house of God.'

stood: the intransitive form of the verb translated **appointed** in ver. 8: it means that the Levites performed the duties to which they were appointed.

with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of [a] Judah, [b] together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad,
10 with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, [c] they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to

[a] In ch. ii. 40, *Hodaviah.* [b] Heb. *as one.*
[c] According to some MSS. and ancient versions, *the priests stood.*

Jeshua . . . his brethren: i. e. Levitical families connected by blood relationship with that of Jeshua (Joshua) and called by that name, though not claiming descent from one ancestor, Jeshua.

Judah: read (with most moderns) 'Hodaviah': see ii. 40. The Hebrew words could be easily confounded, especially as the first consonant of Judah is identical with the last of the preceding word. But Neh. xii. 8 shows that there was a Levitical clan Judah.

Henadad: this name is here probably due to a marginal gloss. First an editor would substitute in the margin 'Hodaviah' for 'Judah.' This found its way into the text alongside of Judah. A later editor, thinking of Neh. x. 9, substituted Henadad. We have really in this verse but two Levitical clans, those enumerated in ii. 40.

their sons and their brethren: i. e. the descendants and brethren of Kadmiel and Hodaviah the Levites. Render, '(even all) the Levites': this sums up the preceding.

10. Note that in this verse Levites seem to act as musicians; in the oldest sources of Ezra-Nehemiah the latter are a clan apart. See pp. 16, 61 f., and on Neh. xi. 17.

builders: i. e. the workmen.

they set: if we retain the M. T. we must take the construction to be what is called that of the indefinite subject, which is generally best Englished by the passive 'were set,' &c. But it is far better to follow the LXX (including *Luc.*), Vulg. Syr., 1 Esd. v. 59, and at least thirteen Hebrew MSS., and to read the intransitive form of the verb, changing vowels only which were originally not written: so 'they stood' in the sense 'stepped forward' as in Ps. cvi. 23, Neh. xii. 40, and Ezek. xxii. 30. The priests came forward to perform their duties clothed in their robes of office, and with trumpets.

trumpets: blown by priests alone: see Num. x. 8 f. and 1 Chron. xiii. 8; cf. Neh. xii. 35, 41.

cymbals: played on by Levites: see Neh. xii. 27; 2 Chron. v. 12 ff.

praise the LORD, after the order of David king of Israel.
And they sang one to another in praising and giving 11
thanks unto the LORD, *saying*, For he is good, for his
mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the
people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the
LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD
was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads 12
of fathers' *houses*, the old men that had seen [a] the first
house, when the foundation of this house was laid before

[a] Or, *the first house* standing *on its foundation, when this house was before their eyes*

David: see on ver. 2. In post-exilic times David was credited with having originated the musical arrangements of the Temple: see 1 Chron. xxv. 1 ff. and 1 Esd. i. 5, and cf. p. 11.

11. And they sang one to another: Jewish music lacked harmony and counterpoint, but in some degree it made up by a large measure of antiphonal singing, one portion of the choir singing one part of a verse, the other singing the remainder: see Ps. cxxxvi in which each verse has two sections. See *Psalms*, vol. ii. in this series, p. 26, and the references there given. The Hebrew word here rendered 'sang' means 'answered,' and it is so translated in x. 12; Neh. viii. 6.

praising: the Hebrew word is that in *hallelu-yah*, 'praise ye Yah' (= Yahweh): for its etymology see W. R. Smith (*Rel. Sem.*(2), 431 f.).

giving thanks: the Hebrew word denotes primarily stretching forth the hands, as an attitude of worship. See on x. 1 for other senses of the verb.

for his mercy, &c., quoting the words of the refrain: see 1 Chron. xvi. 4; 2 Chron. v. 13, vii. 3, xx. 21; Jer. xxxiii. 11; Ps. cxxxvi. Many think the latter was sung on the present occasion, but there is no proof of that.

mercy: render 'lovingkindness.'

12. the old men: the word rendered 'elders' in v. 5 and elsewhere, but here having its literal not its official signification.

From 586, when the Temple was destroyed, to the present year 536, there is but a space of half a century, so that many who witnessed the present events must have had vivid remembrances of the appearance of the old Temple.

when the foundation of this house, &c.: this clause must be joined to what follows and not (as the Hebrew accents require) with what precedes, though the Hebrew is peculiar and even inaccurate.

their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted
13 aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

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wept, as they saw the contrast between what of the new Temple was before their eyes and the complete Solomonian Temple as memory recalled it.

shouted aloud for joy: not only did the young and middle-aged rejoice that they were to have a Temple like that of which their fathers had spoken and sung, but many of the old men, even those who wept, must have shared the gladness of the occasion.

IV. (1 Esd. v. 66–73).

1–5. Jewish Refusal of the Samaritan Offer of Co-operation in the Building of the Temple.

It has become quite the fashion to treat this section as the fabrication of the Chronicler, who wished to make his fellow countrymen appear as religious as he could from the time of their reaching Jerusalem, and also to account for the hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Even E. Meyer, a defender of the general authenticity of Ezra-Nehemiah, falls in with the prevailing fashion when writing on these verses (see *Entstehung*, 119 ff.). Yet the grounds on which the authenticity of this section has been denied are almost wholly *a priori* and subjective, and admit of being satisfactorily met.

It has been asked, How could Cyrus, who authorized the return and also the rebuilding of the Temple (see ver. 3), now consent to have the work hindered? In reply it may be said that Cyrus might have been wholly ignorant of what action his subordinates had taken, for we know that about this time he had much on his hands, in the way of protecting lands he had conquered and in the administration of his vast dominions. Moreover, there might well have been reasons for a policy different from that pursued when the Temple-builders were yet in Babylon.

In Hag. i. 6–11 the delay in the work of Temple rebuilding is ascribed to the indifference or unbelief of the people, but here to the opposition of the Samaritans: both causes, it is said, could not be at work; but why? It is not said in ver. 4 f. that through the action of the Samaritans the work was *stopped*, but only that its progress was *checked*. We are told in iv. 24 that the work ceased, but we are not informed as to *all* the causes of that. When the exiles returned they had much to do in the way of

building and rebuilding houses, dividing and cultivating the land, organizing the community and the like. The building of the Temple was not the only task that devolved upon them.

On Schrader's rejection and subsequent acceptance of the statement regarding Esar-haddon in ver. 2 see on that verse. Meyer (*Entstehung*, 124 ff.; cf. *Geschichte*, iii. 192), though a defender of parts of Ezra-Neh. which are now regarded by many scholars as unhistorical (the Aramaic documents, &c.), is very decidedly of opinion that these five verses are an invention of the Chronicler and unhistorical. He thinks it extremely unlikely that the Samaritans, at this time the more numerous and important party, should seek religious alliance with the Jews, and still more unlikely that the Jews should have refused so flattering an offer. On the contrary, a careful consideration of all the facts will make very likely what Meyer declares to be unlikely. Why should not the Samaritans ask to be allowed to join the Jews in the great task of restoring the Temple? These Samaritans were all of them Yahweh worshippers, though their Yahweh worship was disfigured by some heathen accompaniments (e. g. representing Yahweh in the shape of their ancestral deities: 2 Kings xvii. 29); Josiah (d. 609) had suppressed the high places in Samaria as well as those in Judaea (2 Kings xxiii. 15 ff.), and compelled the Samaritans to contribute towards the upkeep of the Jerusalem Temple (2 Kings xxiii. 9). It may be gathered from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9 and Jer. xli. 3 ff. that at least some Samaritans worshipped at the Jerusalem Temple, and these were genuine Samaritans, not renegade Jews. In matters of religion the Samaritans had come to regard the Jews as their superiors, and it is to this that we are to ascribe the fact that at a later time the Samaritans took over the Jewish law-book (the Pentateuch), making it their own religious code.

On the other hand, Meyer infers from Isa. lvi. 1–8 that the Jews of this time were broad-minded, ready to welcome into their community eunuchs and foreigners. But most moderns (Duhm, Cheyne, &c.) think that this declaration belongs to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, when the Jewish community was admittedly exclusive. No scholar dates this utterance in the period immediately after the return, though many (e. g. Marti) ascribe it to the time just before the exiles left Babylon. Moreover, Meyer has forgotten that Ezekiel's Jewish code (Ezek. xl–xlviii), which he admits to be a very narrow one (*Geschichte*, iii. 182), was drafted during the exile and formed the standard of the post-exilic religious life of the Jews. Besides, if, as Meyer holds (*Entstehung*, 239), Ezra hated the Samaritans on account of their idolatry so much as to wish to keep them out of Jerusalem, why should not Zerubbabel, acting in a similar spirit, refuse co-operation with the Samaritans now?

It would be equally easy to answer the statement of Marquart (*Fundamenta*, 55, 57) that the Chronicler invented the statements

4 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin
heard that the children of the captivity builded a temple
2 unto the LORD, the God of Israel; then they drew near
to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' *houses*, and
said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your
God, as ye do; [a] and we do sacrifice unto him since the
days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria, which brought us

[a] Another reading is, *yet we do no sacrifice since &c.*

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in Ezra iv. 1–5 for the purpose of justifying Nehemiah's violent treatment of the Samaritans. See an able reply by Jampel, *Wiederherstellung*, 77 ff.

1. adversaries: the Samaritans, who inherited the envy and ill-will of the Israelites towards the Jews. They do not accurately describe themselves when (see ver. 2) they speak of themselves as having been brought from Assyria, for though that is true of the rulers of the Samaritan population after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, yet the bulk of the people were Israelites. An inscription of Sargon's says that only 27,000 Samaritans were removed; over 200,000 Jews were deported into Babylon.

Judah and Benjamin: the later designation for the older 'Judah': see on i. 5.

children of the captivity: lit. 'sons of,' &c.; so vi. 16, &c. The words 'son of' denote in Semitic one having the quality annexed; a 'son of wisdom' = 'a wise man'; 'sons of the captivity' = 'captives.' Here of course the expression means 'those who had been captives.' See on ii. 1, where the abstract 'captivity' = 'captives,' according to a common usage in Hebrew.

builded: Heb. 'were building.'

2. to Zerubbabel: add 'and to Jeshua' with *Luc.*, 1 Esd. v. 68. Cf. ver. 3.

seek: the Hebrew word is used of consulting Yahweh with a view to receiving an oracle: see 1 Chron. x. 14, &c.

The word came to be used then of worshipping and acknowledging as God. Here the tense denotes what is customary: 'We are in the habit of seeking,' &c., i.e. 'We are Yahweh worshippers as much as ye are.'

we do sacrifice unto him: the M.T. has 'not' for 'unto him'; but these two Hebrew words, because pronounced alike, are often confounded through copying from dictation: see Exod. xxi. 8, &c. The Hebrew text means 'we do not sacrifice (unto idols),' but the verb rendered sacrifice has never by itself the sense 'to sacrifice to idols.' The versions, including 1 Esdras, have 'unto him' as the E.VV.

up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of 3
the heads of fathers' *houses* of Israel, said unto them, Ye
have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our
God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD,
the God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath
commanded us. Then the people of the land weakened 4
the hands of the people of Judah, and [a] troubled them in
building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate 5
their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even
until the reign of Darius king of Persia. [R] And in the 6

[a] Or, *terrified*

Esar-haddon: we are nowhere else in the Old Testament told that this Assyrian king populated Samaria with the inhabitants from other rebellious parts (Assyria), though we are told quite definitely in the inscriptions that he populated other conquered countries and districts in this way. There does not seem the slightest reason for reading Sargon or Ashurbanipal here (see *COT.* ii. 61, where Schrader defends the genuineness of the name here after denying it in an earlier writing). We read of other deportations in 2 Kings xvii. 24 ff. (by Sargon), and in Ezra iv. 10 (Osnappar = Ashurbanipal).

3. as king Cyrus, &c.: see i. 3. Cyrus's decree had reference to the Jews in exile, and to no others.

4. the people of the land: i. e. the adversaries of ver. 1 (see on iii. 3). In post-biblical Hebrew the phrase means the 'common people,' 'the uneducated' in particular. There may be here a touch of irony—'these ignorant Samaritans': see iii. 3 and ix. 1; cf. John vii. 49.

weakened the hands: lit. 'made the hands hang down loose'—that is, they took heart out of them; discouraged them: see Neh. v. 9.

troubled: Heb. (though the Hebrew letters have been accidentally mixed) 'they frightened them as regards building,' i. e. they terrified them so by threats that they were afraid to go on with the work.

5. hired counsellors, &c.: paid men who had influence at the Persian court and skill in speech to plead their cause before the king and his ministers; cf. Neh. xiii. 2. The verb translated **to frustrate** means lit. 'to break,' and occurs also in Neh. iv. 9.

the days of Cyrus . . . until the reign of Darius, i. e. fourteen years, made up as follows; five (last) years of Cyrus, seven years of Cambyses, seven months of Pseudo-Smerdis, two years of Darius (Hystaspis).

IV. 6–23 (1 Esd. ii. 15–25 (26)).

Opposition to the Building of the City Walls a Short Time before the First Arrival of Nehemiah, or after his Arrival and During his Work.

This section has strayed from its proper place in Nehemiah, or more probably from its place between Ezra x and Neh. i. It has nothing to do with the building of the *Temple*, which had been completed before Ezra's arrival: it is of the restoration of the *walls* that we here read (see ver. 12). In a similar way Neh. vii. 73[b] to x belong to the life and work of Ezra and not to those of Nehemiah, and must be placed in what we call 'Ezra' (see on that passage). It is marvellous, remembering that books in those times consisted of prepared skins written on and then attached, that far more of our O.T. is not dislocated than is the case.

Apart from the fact that we read in these verses of the repairing of the *walls* and not of the restoration of the *Temple*, chronological considerations show that we have here a narrative that is out of its true connexion. In ver. 6 we read of King Xerxes (485–465), and in verses 7–23 it is of his successor Artaxerxes (Longimanus, 465–423) that we read. Then in ver. 24 we have mention of King Darius, by whom we are certainly to understand Darius Hystaspis (521–486). Ingenious and learned attempts have been made to account for this chronological anomaly, none of them so satisfactory as the explanation given above, which is that of many recent scholars (Kuenen, v. Hoonacker, Kent, &c.). It should be said that all external evidence, including that of 1 Esd. ii is against transferring verses 6–23 to Nehemiah.

Where are we to place the incidents of Ezra iv. 7–23? Probably, with Meyer and v. Hoonacker, between Ezra x and Neh. i, and not with Kent after Neh. vi, since in the latter chapter we read of the completion of the walls. The sad condition of Jerusalem and of its inhabitants which Neh. i. 3 implies seems to be that which followed upon the royal edict in Ezra iv. 21 ff. The surprise and grief of Nehemiah on hearing the report of Hanani, his brother, must have been due not to his learning for the first time of the royal edict—of that he could not but have had knowledge—but to his hearing of the cruel way in which that edict was carried out. It was of some recent calamity that Nehemiah heard, and not, as Keil, Schultz, &c., held, of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 by Nebuchadnezzar. This latter could have been no news to Nehemiah, not even the manner and results of it. Graetz and Kosters deny the historicity of the section, mainly because (see ver. 12) it implies that there was a return of exiles before the arrival of Ezra and his companions; but see Introd., p. 23 ff.

According to the present text (M.T.) of verses 6 ff., three letters of complaint are forwarded to the Persian court. (1) One is sent to King Xerxes—by whom we are not told, though we must

reign of [a] Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote

[a] Or, *Xerxes* Heb. *Ahashverosh.*

understand the Samaritans to be the senders. (2) A second is sent by Mithredath. (3) Rehum, &c., forward a letter—the third to be mentioned in verses 6–8. In 1 Esd. ii. 16 the first letter (ver. 6) is ignored, and the senders of 2 and 3 are united and made the senders of one letter between them, though Rehum, the commander, and Shimshai, the recorder (the names differ considerably in the Greek of the Apocrypha) are mentioned twice, showing that there is some confusion. In the original text mention was made, perhaps, of two letters: (1) one sent in the reign of Xerxes (ver. 6); (2) another sent to Artaxerxes from members of the Samaritan party at Jerusalem (Mithredath, &c.) through the Persian officials, Rehum, &c., who resided at Samaria; it is to them that the king sends his answer. Probably, however, we are with 1 Esdras to omit ver. 6 (see on), so that we have but one letter sent to Artaxerxes I, and not two. This one letter was sent from Jerusalem by Jewish leaders to the Persian official at Samaria, to be forwarded to the king: see on verses 8–10. Klostermann[1], followed in part by Sellin, holds that in this correspondence it is Tabeel and his companions who write in the name ('Bishlam' is so read) of Mithredath to plead with the king to allow the Jews to go on with their work of rebuilding, adding the incidents mentioned in v. 1–vi. 18 to show that in the past the charges brought against the Jews had been found baseless, as the charges now made are likely to be. This view of the Aramaic section, besides requiring a large number of textual changes, is in itself most improbable.

6. This verse cannot go along with verses 7–23 if the above placing of this section is correct, since Ahasuerus (the Xerxes of the Greek) reigned 485–465 B.C., so that nothing occurring in his reign could belong to the period between Ezra x and Neh. i (cir. 446 B.C.) or to the time following the events of Neh. vi. Probably the verse was inserted as a link of connexion between iv. 5 and verses 7–23 after the latter verses had by mistake got into their present context. Nothing corresponding to this verse occurs in the parallel section of 1 Esdras, which is an additional reason for regarding it as an interpolation.

Ahasuerus: Heb. *Akhashwerosh*; Old Pers. *Khshayārshā*; Aram. Papyri (Sayce and Cowley, consonants only) *Kšy'rš*: the well-known king of Persia called Xerxes by the Greek historians.

wrote they: render 'there was written,' which the Hebrew equally allows. We are not told who made the charge. According to the present connexion of the verse it must have been the Samaritan party.

[1] *Herzog*(3), V., p. 516 f.

they an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 [C_A] And in the days of [a]Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the [b]Syrian *character*, and set forth in the [b]Syrian
8 *tongue*. [c] Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe

[a] Heb. *Artahshashta*. [b] Or, *Aramaic*
[c] Ch. iv. 8–vi. 18 is in Aramaic.

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accusation: Heb. *sitnah* (occurring here only in the O.T.), cognate with the noun *Satan*, 'one that accuses,' or 'maligns.'

7–10. *Letter sent to Artaxerxes.* See Remarks, p. 84 f.

7. Bishlam: read 'with (their) greeting'; so LXX (including *Luc.*), Syr., Klosterm.: 'Mithredath, &c., write sending their respects.' No change in the original Hebrew text is necessary, and but a change of one vowel in the present text.

Mithredath: not the Persian official of i. 8. The Persians mentioned in ver. 7 were all probably residents in Jerusalem, members of the Samaritan party, all of them also, it would seem, subordinate officials of the Persian government.

Tabeel: an Aramaic name = 'God is good' (see Isa. vii. 6).

letter: Heb. *nishtᵉwan*, of Persian origin: found only in Ezra. See on ver. 8 (**letter**).

For **Syrian** ('Syriac' is now used of the language and of its letters) use 'Aramaic,' which is a broader term. The R.Vm. gives the right sense of the Hebrew. It was neither the Persian character nor the Persian language. Though it would seem first written in Persian by Persian officials, the letter was then translated into Aramaic, the language of Persian diplomacy (see p. 13 ff.), and of course then written with Aramaic characters—the so-called Assyrian or square letters used in modern Heb. Bibles.

8–10. The letter composed and written at Jerusalem was sent to the Commander and Recorder of Transpotamia, who resided in Samaria. They were asked to transmit it with their dispatches to the king. At the close of the verse we must supply actually or in sense words similar to ('forwarded the letter') 'which was as follows.'

8–23 is written in Aramaic closely resembling that of the papyri recently found in Egypt. See p. 13 ff.

8. Rehum . . . Shimshai: that the letter indited in Jerusalem was sent through these two men and their associates is confirmed by the fact that the answer of the king was addressed to these same persons. It is, however, evident that verses 8 f. have got

wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort: then *wrote* Rehum the chancellor, and Shim- 9
shai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the

somewhat mixed up, the above two names being mentioned by mistake twice. Render as follows: 8. 'Rehum . . . and Shimshai 9. and the rest (being) their associates (viz.) the judges,' &c.

chancellor: lit. 'master of counsel,' i. e. counsellor. We are no doubt to understand the subordinate or Samaritan lieutenant of the Transpotamian Satrap. So Meyer, Menti, Bertholet, &c. With the rapid extension of the Persian empire under Cyrus the territory was divided into four large satrapies, the country west of the Euphrates and south of the Taurus and Amanus being one. In Ezra viii. 36, &c., Neh. ii. 7, 9, &c., and in 1 Kings iv. 24 (Heb. v. 4) it has the name *Eber Hannahar*, which = 'what is beyond the river' (Euphrates), and as it is really a proper name we must call it by its Hebrew name (against its slightly different Aramaic form 'speaks') or call it Transpotamia, a name corresponding to Mesopotamia (= between the rivers), though this new name does not of course occur as Mesopotamia does in classical or in any authors. Throughout the present volume 'Transpotamia' will be used. Meyer transliterates the Aramaic, calling the satrapy 'Abarnahara.' That the name was used regardless of its literal sense is shown by the fact that it is used by those who lived west of the Euphrates as well as by those residing east of that river: see the passages already referred to. Notwithstanding the meaning of the name the district embraced also the Aramaean country and some other localities east of the river. See Meyer, *Gesch.*, iii. 136 f.; cf. p. 49 ff.

the scribe: i. e. chief secretary of the Samaritan lieutenant.

a letter: the word used (here in its Aram. form) denotes always an official communication, as from the king or governor. It occurs only in its Hebrew form (*iggeret*) in Nehemiah (five times), Esther (twice), and Chronicles (twice). In its Aramaic form it is found in Ezra (four times) alone. It may be of Babylonian origin (*egirtu*), as Fried. Delitzsch, Sayce, Meissner, &c., hold, but that is uncertain[1]. See on ver. 7 and on Neh. ii. 7.

9 f. *Those who joined Rehum and Shimshai in the appeal to Artaxerxes.* We have here a mixture of official and tribal (or local?) names which have caused much discussion, and in regard to which no certain conclusion is possible. Perhaps even the names of peoples are to be understood in an official sense: e. g. the Babylonians = those in charge of astronomical matters and questions of the calendar arising therefrom, &c.

[1] Prof. Sayce says that the etymology of the word can be explained from the Babylonian alone, which shows, in his opinion, that the Hebrew and Aramaic terms are borrowed from the Babylonian.

Dinaites, and the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Shushan-
10 chites, the Dehaites, the Elamites, and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar brought

9. the Dinaites, &c.: render, 'The Persian judges, the Persian tarpelites, &c., the Archevites.' &c. The words Apharsathchites, Apharsites in ver. 9, and Apharsachites in v. 6 and vi, have never been satisfactorily explained, though many guesses have been made as to places whence the words are supposed to be derived. Hoffmann and Meyer suggest that at the basis of each word we have the Hebrew and Aramaic word for Persia—the consonants are identical—and that the *ch* in Apharsathchites and Apharsachites is the old Persian (Iranian adjectival ending. Meyer then omits 'and,' rendering as above. The 'Persian judges' and the 'Persian tarpelites' (an unexplained official term) of the Samaritan subsatrapy are not to be classed with those whom the Assyrian king Osnappar transported. Of many explanations this seems to the present writer the most likely, or at any rate the least unlikely one. See Meyer, *Entst.*, 35 ff. v. Hoonacker (*Nouvelles Études*, p. 166 ff.) argues strongly that the words here stand for peoples and not for officials, as Kosters maintained.

Dinaites: read (slightly altering the vowels) 'judges.' So 1 Esdras, *Luc.*, and some MSS. of the LXX.

Apharsathchites: render 'Persian.' The initial is prosthetic and no part of the root (so often in similar words: see Meyer, as above), and the 't' wrongly inserted. The original letters corresponding to 'phars' are those of Persia.

Tarpelites: probably officials, though the etymology of the word is untraceable. Perhaps the text is at fault.

Apharsites: render 'Persian' (see above).

Archevites: people from Erek (Gen. x. 10), the Assyrian Arku = Urku in Babylon.

Shushanchites: the *ch* is the old Persian (Iran.) adjective ending (see on **Apharsathchites**)[1]. We are to understand people from Susa.

the Dehaites, the Elamites: read and render 'that is the Elamites,' Susa being the ancient capital of Elam: so LXX (not *Luc.*) and most moderns. We should hardly in English speak of 'Londoners and English people.'

10. Osnappar: identified first by Gelzer and since by nearly all scholars with Ashurbanipal (king of Assyria from 668 to 626), the Sardanapallos of the Greeks. Two consonants have dropped out of the word; in other respects the consonants of both words

[1] The old Elamite form is 'Susunqa.' (So Sayce).

over, and set in the city of Samaria, and in the rest *of the country* beyond the river, and so forth. This is the 11
copy of the letter that they sent unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men beyond the river, and so forth. Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which 12

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are almost identical, notwithstanding the differences in English. *r* and *l* are written very much alike in Aramaic: see Sayce and Cowley (*Aramaic Papyri*).

brought over: this does not apply to the Persian officials mentioned in the preceding verse: see notes on.

in the rest, &c.: render 'in other parts of Transpotamia.' The words in italics are not needed. The Aramaic (and Hebrew) for 'beyond the river' is really a proper name, and might well be represented in English by Transpotamia, cf. Mesopotamia. The proper name thus suggested is, though a hybrid, less objectionable than any other which occurs to the present writer. 'Beyond the river' is misleading, as it is often used of dwellers who are themselves 'beyond the river' (Euphrates), though it denotes the same stretch of country in their mouths as in the mouths of, say, Persians: see on ver. 8.

Samaria was not the only part of the province or satrapy whither the Assyrian king brought foreign settlers. These, or the officials so designated, joined in the message to the Persian king.

and so forth: render (wrote) 'as follows.' The original words are used (see vii. 12 and the Aramaic papyri) as a formula introducing a letter. The verb 'wrote' is to be supplied from ver. 9, but in Aramaic (as in Hebrew) does not need to be repeated.

11–16. *Contents of the letter containing the accusation.*

Kuenen (*Einleitung*, i. 2, 178) and Stade (*Gesch.*, ii. 159) say that the letter bears marks of fabrication with a view to extolling the power of the Jews (see verses 13, 19 f.). But the senders of such a missive would of set purpose magnify the power of the Jewish community.

11. copy: the word used here is of Persian origin; it occurs in ver. 23, v. 6, vii. 11, and (with the difference of one letter) in Esther iii. 14, iv. 8, viii. 13.

the men beyond the river: render 'the men of Transpotamia': see on ver. 8.

and so forth: see on ver. 10.

12. Jews: this is the earliest occurrence of this word for the new religious community in Jerusalem: previously it denoted the inhabitants of the Southern Kingdom (2 Kings xvi. 6, xxv. 25, &c.). It is in this new sense that the term is now employed. With us 'Jews' are those who profess Judaism wherever they live.

came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem; they
are building the rebellious and the bad city, and have
13 finished the walls, and repaired the foundations. Be it
known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded,
and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom,
14 or toll, and in the end it will endamage the kings. Now
because we eat the salt of the palace, and it is not meet
for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we
15 sent and certified the king; that search may be made in
the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou

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have finished, &c.: in the next verse the finishing of the wall is still in the future. Better therefore treat the forms of the verb here and there as future perfects: 'They are building . . . and will have finished . . . and repaired.' Tense as such is not expressed in Semitic, but manner of action, either completed or still proceeding, and that in past, present, or future. See *Heinrich Ewald, a Centenary Appreciation* (by the present writer), pp. 48 ff., 81 ff.

13. tribute: a money contribution paid by a subject province to the imperial exchequer: see vi. 8 and Neh. v. 4.

custom: a tax levied on income (merchandise, agricultural produce, proceeds of the chase or of fishing, &c.), and used for the maintenance of the province itself and the payment of its officials.

toll: a road tax for the upkeep of the roads and for making new ones. Cf. the charge made in this country until lately at turnpike gates.

in the end: so Bertheau-Ryssel (tracing the word to Persian), Fried. Delitzsch (deriving from Babylonian), and others. The majority of scholars, changing the final letter to one almost exactly like it (*s* for *m*), give it a rendering similar to that of the A.V., translating this part of the verse thus: 'and it (the city) will affect injuriously the revenue of the kings.' So the Rabbis.

14. we eat the salt of the palace: in Aramaic the verb rendered eat and the noun for salt are cognate, 'we eat salt of the salt,' &c. Cf. Heb. 'to sacrifice a sacrifice = to offer a sacrifice' (see Num. v. 15). This is a common idiom in Semitic: 'To eat of the salt of the palace' = 'to be in the king's service.' Kautzsch (*Aram. Grammar*, 71, 72), followed by Bertholet, holds that a symbolic act is here to be understood, viz. making a covenant by salt: see Num. xviii. 19; 2 Chron. xiii. 5; cf. Lev. ii. 13. So *BDB.*, which interprets: 'we have assumed obligations of loyalty.'

15. book: read (with *Luc.*, Vulg., 1 Esd. ii. 21) 'books,'

find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city laid waste. We cer- 16 tify the king that, if this city be builded, and the walls finished, by this means thou shalt have no portion beyond the river. *Then* sent the king an answer unto Rehum the 17

We must understand, however, in the case of Assyria and Babylon, clay tablets similar to those found some twenty years ago in Tel-el-Amarna, Egypt. The Persians had (Ktesias says) adopted the custom prevalent in Palestine of writing with ink on skins. The reference is to state records such as were kept by Greeks (see *Herod.* viii. 90), Egyptians (*Zeitschrift für Ägyptologie*, xxxviii. 8), and other ancient nations. See vi. 1; Esther ii. 23, vi. 1; 2 Macc. ii. 13; cf. Mal. iii. 16, and my note on Esther ii. 23.

fathers: i. e. predecessors, Persian, Babylon, and Assyrian.

and that they, &c.: 1 Esd. ii. 23 supplies the subject 'the Jews,' which has accidentally fallen out of the Hebrew.

city laid waste: referring to its destruction in 586 by Nebuchadnezzar. Jerusalem would not have been destroyed but for the disloyalty of its subject-king (Zedekiah) and people to its Babylonian conqueror.

16. The king is assured that if he allows Jerusalem to be once more fortified it would throw off allegiance to him as it had to his Babylonian predecessor in 586.

beyond the river: i. e. in Transpotamia: see on ver. 8.

17-23. *The king's reply.* Kosters and others see in ver. 19 a proof that the whole of this section is an invention of the Chronicler to magnify the importance of the Jewish nation in the past. But it would harmonize with the scheme of the Samaritan party to exaggerate the past power of the Jews, so as to make the king afraid of the power they might yet acquire and use. Besides, conquerors often make the power of conquered foes greater than it is, so as to make their own prowess appear the greater.

Wellhausen objects to the historicity of this narrative because (he says) the Artaxerxes who (Neh. ii) permitted the walls to be built could not at an earlier date have prohibited the same and commanded the demolition of what was built. But he forgets or does not know that, as Nöldeke, Meyer, and other historians have pointed out, this king was a very capricious man, and did many things which it is impossible to reconcile with any consistent policy.

chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and [a] in the rest
18 *of the country* beyond the river, Peace, and so forth. The letter which ye sent unto us hath been [b] plainly read before
19 me. And I decreed, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been
20 made therein. There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all *the country* beyond the river; and tribute, custom, and toll, was paid unto

[a] Or, *unto the rest beyond &c.* [b] Or, *translated*

17-22. *Answer of the king.* The king's answer came to Rehum and his companions; there was therefore but one letter sent at this time, not two: see on verses 6-23.

17. answer: the original term here (*pithgama*) comes from the Persian and denotes usually the decision of a king (see Esther i. 20).

chancellor: see on v. 8.

18. plainly (read): lit. 'distinctly,' separating the sounds and words so as to make the meaning clear. Ignore the R. Vm. 'translated.' The verb, whence the word occurring here, denotes in Heb. and Aram. primarily 'to separate,' and then 'to interpret.' But here (Aram.) and in Neh. viii. 8 (Heb.) the passive participle is used adverbially 'distinctly,' i. e. sounding the words and parts of words so that each can be followed and understood.

19. this city of old time hath made insurrection, &c.: see 2 Kings xviii. 7; xxiv. 1, 20.

20. Render, 'And mighty kings have there been over Jerusalem, yea (such as) have exercised rule over all Transpotamia,' &c. We need not understand these words as stating what is strictly true. The officials in Samaria would have strong reasons for exaggeration. The more powerful Jewish kings had been the greater the danger to the Persian power now. Still the words seem hardly too strong as applied to David and Solomon, and the archives of their reigns might well have been preserved at Jerusalem until removed by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. G. Rawlinson thinks the reference is either to Menahem, King of Israel (see 2 Kings xv. 14-16), or to Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 6 f.; xxxv. 18); but the state of things in their reigns does not correspond to this description. On the Arch of Titus at Rome there is an equally exaggerated account of the greatness of Jerusalem, which Titus had conquered and destroyed, and these words are due to the Roman Senate.

tribute, &c.: see on ver. 13.

them. Make ye now a decree to cause these men to 21
cease, and that this city be not builded, until a decree
shall be made by me. And take heed that ye be not slack 22
herein: why should damage grow to the hurt of the
kings? Then when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter 23
was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and
their companions, they went in haste to Jerusalem unto
the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.
[T_A] Then ceased the work of the house of God which 24
is at Jerusalem; and it ceased unto the second year of
the reign of Darius king of Persia.

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21. until a decree, &c.: such a decree was issued to Nehemiah: see Neh. ii. 8 ff.

22. why, &c.: render, 'lest mischief be increased so as to injure the kings.' So essentially the Versions.

Rehum: add 'the counsellor' as in verses 8 f. and 17 with the Versions, including *Luc.* and 1 Esdras ii. 25.

23. *The work is stopped as the king commanded.*

23. by force and power: lit. 'with an arm and with strength,' i. e. 'with a strong arm,' a hendiadys. The second word means also 'an army,' 'a crowd of people.' Syr. 'with a powerful army,' which the original may mean, as 'arm' often = 'strength' (see Job xxii. 8, &c.), and 'strength and army' = a 'strong army' (hendiadys).

IV. 24–VI. 22 (‖ 1 Esd. ii. 25^b+VI, VII).

CONTINUATION OF THE NARRATIVE INTERRUPTED BY IV. 6–23. THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, WITH THE APPROVAL AND SUPPORT OF THE KING OF PERSIA.

iv. 24–v. 5. *Rebuilding of the Temple resumed and opposed.*

iv. 24. This verse is the natural continuation of ver. 5. The interruption in the building of the Temple lasted until the second year of Darius Hystaspis, i. e. until 520. The occurrence (twice) of the verb 'cease' in ver. 24 and of the transitive form (Pa.) of the same verb in ver. 23 may have led the compiler to place iv. 6–23 immediately before ver. 24, though in reality the latter has reference to the Temple, the interpolated passage to the walls.

v. 17. *Haggai and Zechariah urge the people to complete the building of the Temple.*

From the fact that under the influence of the preaching of these prophets the work of building the Temple was resumed

5 Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah

it may be inferred that this task was not made impossible but simply difficult by the Samaritan party: see on iv. 4. To what are we to ascribe this fresh interest in the Temple? Probably, as Meyer points out[1], it is to the expectation which had arisen that the Messianic time was dawning. Many of the signs spoken of by the older prophets had shown themselves. The Persian kingdom at the accession of Darius (521) was torn asunder by internal dissensions, its very existence being endangered by the defection of subject countries, such as Assyria, Armenia, Babylon, Media, Parthia, and especially Susiana, which almost succeeded in regaining its independence. All this seemed to portend a still greater shaking of the nations, presaging the fall of Persia and the setting up of the Messianic kingdom with Zerubbabel as king (see Hag. ii. 23, Zech. vi. 8–13, and Driver's notes in *Century Bible*). The celestial signs of the downfall of Persia resemble those which were to precede that of Babylon (Isa. xiii. 10, 13; cf. Amos v. 18; Ezek. xxxii. 7 f.; and Joel ii. 27). Sellin[2] has tried to prove that a Messianic kingdom was actually established in Judaea with Zerubbabel for king, but that this part of the province was reconquered, Zerubbabel being put to death. Winckler holds a similar position. To both the suffering servant in Isa. liii is Zerubbabel, who suffered at the hand of the Persian government for the good of the people. Much of this is mere speculation capable of neither proof nor disproof. But it is probable that both Haggai and Zechariah were prompted in their preaching by a belief that the Messiah was about to make His appearance; that the Temple was therefore to be built for His reception, so that all the nations of the earth might gather therein to worship the one true God (see Isa. ii. 2–4, &c.).

1. (the prophets, Haggai) **the prophet:** though apparently unnecessary after what precedes, its correctness is supported by vi. 14, Hag. i. 1. 'Haggai the prophet' seems one whole clause, not to be broken up. Haggai (see his book) reproves the people for their delay in going on with the work of building the Temple. His prophecies were uttered in the second year of Darius (520); that Darius Hystaspis (†485) is meant and not Darius Nothus (†404) is proved by the fact that some of the present builders had seen the Temple destroyed in 586: see Hag. ii. 3.

Zechariah, the son of Iddo: the word rendered 'son' means often descendant; here it means grandson: see Zech. i. 7, 'Zechariah the prophet, son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.' We probably read in Neh. xii. 4 of this Iddo as head of a priestly

[1] *Geschichte*, iii. 194 ff.; *Entstehung*, 174 ff. So Driver, 'Minor Prophets' (*Century Bible*), 151 f. [2] *Serubbabel.*

the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem; in the name of the God of Israel [a] *prophesied they* unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel 2
the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.

[a] Or, which was *upon them*

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family that returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua: and in Neh. xii. 16 mention is made of a 'Zechariah son of Iddo' as head of a priestly house in the time of Nehemiah. The latter would be a descendant of the prophet. The same names constantly recur in oriental genealogical lists (Arabic, Hebrew, Samaritan, &c.).

In Zechariah's genuine prophecies (Zech. i–viii) there are eight visions in which that number of difficulties or discouragements are severally disposed of. The prophet shows that the way is really open; that with God's help they could and should go forward with the work. Zechariah's prophecies belong to the years 519–517, being dated in the second and fourth year of Darius.

prophesied: the Hebrew verb in the form which occurs here means to perform the part of the *nabi* or prophet, as it is rendered. The word *nabi* means probably first of all a speaker; then a speaker on behalf of God, or one commissioned by God. Kuenen and others give the noun a passive sense, 'one that is stirred up' or 'inspired to speak.' In any case the idea of prediction is not in the word itself, though one that speaks by the authority or inspiration of God will sometimes speak of the future, especially when warning men of the consequence of sin.

the Jews . . . in Judah and Jerusalem: i. e. those in the country parts of Judah and in Jerusalem, in contrast with those remaining in Babylon and other places out of Palestine.

in the name, &c.: render, as in the R.Vm., 'in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.'

2. Zerubbabel: see on i. 8 and ii. 2 and ver. 1 f.

Jeshua: see on ii. 2.

began to build: see on iii. 8–13. The former beginning was so slight, and what was done so injured in the intervening sixteen years, that a new beginning had to be made.

Here and in iii. 8 Zerubbabel and Jeshua are the leaders in building. In verses 5, 9 and in vi. 7, 8, 14, the elders alone are mentioned. Bertholet thinks the difference due to different sources, but why? Were they not elders (see ii. 2), and did they not act in the name of the other elders? And did not elegance then as now suggest variety of expression as a desirable thing?

At the same time came to them Tattenai, the governor beyond the river, and Shethar-bozenai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who gave you a
4 decree to build this house, and to finish this wall? [a] Then

[a] Or, *Then spake we unto them after this manner. What,* said they, *are the names of the men that make this building?* Or, according to some ancient versions, *Then spake they unto them &c.* See ver. 10.

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v. 3–vi. 12, see on vi. 7 (1 Esd. vi. 3–34). *Unsuccessful opposition of the Persian officials and their allies to the building of the Temple.*

v. 3–5. *Persian officials make inquiries of the builders.*

3. Tattenai: called Sisinnes in 1 Esd. vi. 3 and in Joseph. *Antiq.* xi. 1. 3. In the Cuneiform contract tablets of the first and third years of Darius Hystaspis (Nos. 27 and 82) mention is made of an Uštannai, governor or satrap of Transpotamia: he is described in Assyrian word for word as here in Aramaic [lit. governor of the (province) across the river]. That the same individual is meant is hardly open to doubt. Bruno Meissner who was the first to point out this identification thinks that here and vi. 6, where alone it occurs in the O. T., we should read 'Ustannai,' from which Tattenai could easily arise.

There is surely no difficulty, though Wellhausen and others say there is an insuperable one, in thinking of Tattenai on becoming satrap of the whole of Transpotamia as ignorant of an edict issued sixteen years before by Cyrus. In comparison with the whole province he administered, Palestine was a mere corner, and its people of no great consequence politically. It may of course be that, as Meyer and Bertholet conjecture, the satrap feigned ignorance only, so that he might throw in his influence with that of the Samaritans against the project which the Jews had in hand. It is likely that he had been newly appointed, and that he was now on a tour of inspection through his satrapy.

governor: here, as in ver. 6, vi. 6, and Neh. iii. 7, in the sense of satrap (see on viii. 36). Generally the word found here (*pekhah*) denotes a ruler of a sub-satrapy or province (Samaria, Judah, &c.).

Shethar-bozenai: probably chief secretary to Tattenai, as Shimshai to Rehum (iv. 8). Read (with Meyer and Andreas-Marti) 'Mithra-bozenai' = (in Persian) 'Mithra is Saviour': *m* and *sh* are much alike, and vowels are not written in ancient Hebrew.

wall: so Syr. and Vulg.: see also v. 9. This rendering is supported by the cognate languages (Assyrian, &c.), and also by the sense required for the word in the other known place of its occurrence (the Sachau Aramaic Papyri I, line 11), 'They

spake we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building? But the eye of their 5
God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they did not make them cease, till the matter should come to Darius, and then [a] answer should be returned by letter concerning it.

The copy of the letter that Tattenai, the governor be- 6
yond the river, and Shethar-bozenai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were beyond the river, sent unto Darius the king: they sent a letter unto him, wherein was 7
written thus; Unto Darius the king, all peace. Be it 8

[a] Or, *they returned answer*

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destroyed the temple . . . the stone pillars . . . stone gates, doors, roof and the panelling of the *wall*.' Nikel, Haupt, Bertholet, &c., translate 'sanctuary,' and support this by another Assyrian word (*ashru*), which however means 'place,' 'position,' and by the supposed parallelism with 'house,' though Assyrian *ashirtu* does mean 'Temple.'

4. (Then spake) **we**: read (with LXX, Syr.) 'they,' i. e. Tattenai, &c., 'spake unto them' (Zerubbabel, &c.) 'after this manner,' &c. If we follow the M. T. we must (with Meyer) regard the words 'Then spake we' as taken verbatim from the satrap's report.

5. Tattenai gave no orders that the work should be suspended pending the inquiry to be made. The answer could not reach Jerusalem from Susa before some four or five months had passed by. That during these months the building was allowed to go on is regarded as a sure sign that God's watchful eye was upon the work and the workers. See Dan. xi. 12.

elders: see on ver. 2.

V. 6–VI. 12. The Correspondence with Darius (1 Esd. vi).

v. 6–17. *The letter sent to Darius by Tattenai, &c.*

6. the Apharsachites: see on iv. 9 f. Render 'the Persian (officials),' i. e. those in iv. 9 called 'judges' (R. V. 'Dinaites') and 'tarpelites' (an unexplained official name).

beyond the river: render 'in Transpotamia,' and see p. 87.

7. letter: here the word so translated (*pithgama*) is of Persian origin. In iv. 17 it is rendered 'answer,' in vi. 11 'word.' The term in ver. 6 translated 'letter' (*igarta*) is Aramaic.

all peace: the Aramaic and the cognate Hebrew, Arabic, &c., words, too narrowly rendered 'peace,' include in their meaning all the elements of well-being, the idea of completeness being

known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judah, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth on with diligence and prospereth in their
9 hands. Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who gave you a decree to build this house,
10 and to finish this wall? We asked them their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the
11 men that were at the head of them. And thus they

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inherent in the root. It is used as a form of greeting in all the Semitic languages, and also in several of the languages of India. See on Ps. cxix. 165 (*Century Bible*). The addition of 'all' strengthens the greeting.

8. the great God: Tattenai, &c., speak in the language of the Jews. Similarly Cyrus calls Marduk, the principal Babylonian deity, 'the great Lord,' though not himself a Marduk worshipper. *Luc.* and 1 Esd. vi. 9 attach the adjective 'great' to 'house' and not to God (Lord); the Aramaic original allows, though does not require, this.

great stones: lit. 'stones of rolling,' i. e. stones too large to be carried, and having therefore to be rolled. Some of the stones in the western wall of the Temple at Jerusalem which are still *in situ* are twenty-six feet long, six feet high, and seven feet broad. Amid the ruined temples of Baalbek there are stones still larger. The renderings of the LXX ('chosen stones') and of the *Luc.* and 1 Esd. vi. 9 ('polished costly stones') are due to a misunderstanding of the M. T. rather than to a different reading. In 1 Kings v. 31 the expression is 'great stones,' which perhaps should be read here; the difference in the Hebrew is very slight.

timber is laid, &c.: i. e. wooden beams were set in the walls to support floors and ceiling. Siegfried, however, thinks the meaning to be that the walls were covered with wood panelling, but this would indicate too advanced a stage of the building.

with diligence: the original word is Persian and means 'with care and diligence.'

9. elders: see on ver. 2. **wall:** see on ver. 3.

10. names: for the names of the elders see ii. 2.

that were at the head of them: render 'that were their leaders' (or 'chiefs'), i. e. in the building. The word rendered 'head' is plural (though somewhat irregularly written), and the preposition (*beth essentiae* of the grammars) one which often introduces the predicate.

In verses 11–16 we have the answer which the Jews are said

returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and finished. But [a] after that our fathers 12
had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. But in the first year of 13
Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree to

[a] Or, *because that*

to have given to Tattenai, &c. We might have expected this answer immediately after ver. 4.

11. We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth: therefore of the same God whom the Persians professed to acknowledge. It is strange to find Stade[1] speaking of these words as unlikely to be uttered by Persians, for they are quoted as spoken by Jews. But see on ver. 8 and on vii. 21.

these many years ago: i. e. nearly 500 years before the reign of Darius.

a great king: i. e. Solomon.

12. Render 'Nevertheless after our fathers provoked,' &c.

after that: the Aramaic words are identical with those at the commencement of iv. 23, translated by one English word 'when.' Though the expression is temporal not (as R. V., Bertheau-Ryssel, Ryle) causal, yet it is implied that the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar came as a punishment for the sin of their fathers in angering God: it was not that God could not preserve it if He would.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean: the Chaldeans were strictly a people inhabiting a country (Assyrian *Kaldâ*) south-east of Babylonia on what was then the sea-coast. They were conquered by Nabopolassar, King of Babylon (d. 605), and thenceforward Babylonian and Chaldean meant much the same. Nebuchadnezzar was probably by descent a Chaldean. The Chaldean language, though Semitic, is to be carefully distinguished from the Western or Biblical Aramaic, often inaccurately called 'Chaldee.' The latter is the language of the present chapter; the former closely resembles Babylonian, though without the cuneiform script.

13. Cyrus king of Babylon: he is so called in at least eleven undoubted cuneiform passages (see *ZDMG.* 51, p. 663). Artaxerxes is so described in Neh. xiii. 6, and in vi. 22 Darius is called King of Assyria.

[1] *Geschichte*, ii. 122 (note).

14 build this house of God. And the gold and silver ves-
sels also of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar
took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and
brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did
Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Baoylon, and
they were delivered unto one whose name was Sheshbaz-
15 zar, whom he had made governor; and he said unto him,
Take these vessels, go, put them in the temple that is in
Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in its
16 place. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the
foundations of the house of God which is in Jerusalem:
and since that time even until now hath it been in build-
17 ing, and yet it is not completed. Now therefore, if it
seem good to the king, let there be search made in the
king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether
it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to

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14. gold and silver vessels: see on i. 6–11.

into the temple of Babylon: read (with *Luc.*, 1 Esd. v. 18) 'into his own temple,' i. e. the temple of Marduk.

Cyrus the king: see on i. 1.

Sheshbazzar: see on i. 8. Had he been identical with Zerubbabel, the latter and his fellow elders (see ver. 9) could hardly have failed in the reply to make this point clear. Cyrus's commission came to Sheshbazzar—so it appears here and in i. 8—and not to Zerubbabel.

15. in its place: see on iii. 3.

16. Though Sheshbazzar, the Babylonian, laid the first foundation of the Temple the work had to be done over again by Zerubbabel, the Jew, and those with him: see iii. 10 and on iii. 8–13 and v. 2.

and since that time, &c.: these words do not imply that there had been an off-and-on building of the Temple from the time its first foundation was laid. The building once begun can be spoken of as going on until it is completed: see on ver. 2.

17. the king's treasure house: that part of the royal palace at Babylon in which gold, silver, and state documents were kept. In 1850 Henry Layard discovered at Koyunjik, the ancient Nineveh, a part of the royal palace which had been used exclusively for storing the precious metals, documents (baked clay tablets), &c. (*Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 345). See on i. 8 and vii. 21.

build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was 6

VI. 1–12 (1 Esd. vi. 23–34).

As a result of the investigation Darius decrees that the Jews be allowed and aided to complete the building of the Temple.

The objections to the historicity of this section have been many and various, most of them however, in the light of recent research, having little or no weight.

1. Kosters, Graetz, and others have seen a contradiction between verses 1 and 2. We are told (ver. 1) that the search was made in Babylon for Cyrus's edict, but that (ver. 2) it was actually found at Achmetha (Ecbatana). Are we, however, sure of a contradiction here? According to Spiegel (*Eran*, iii. 259), followed by Marquart[1], Bertholet[2], and Jampel[3], Persians had archives in all the cities in which they resided—Susa, Babylon, Persepolis, Pasagarda, and Ecbatana—and they were frequently moved from one city to another. Ferdinand Justi[4] mentions edicts found at Ecbatana in different languages, all spoken by peoples subject to Persia. We must think therefore of this edict as being first sought for in Babylon and at length found at Ecbatana. Had a forger been at work he would have written in ver. 2 either Babylon or Susa.

Kent's conjecture that in ver. 1 we should read 'from Babylon' (see below on ver. 1) implies a very slight change in the Hebrew and removes the difficulty noticed above. Torrey[5] understands by the Heb. *Babel* here 'Babylonia,' a term wide enough (he says, though inaccurately) to include Ecbatana.

2. A difficulty is seen by Kosters and others in the extraordinary generosity displayed by Darius, a generosity transcending that ascribed to Cyrus.

It is said that Haggai and Zechariah could not have complained of the poverty of the people if they had known of such gifts from the Persian king.

In reply note (1) that at a later time Artaxerxes promises Ezra even more for the support of Jewish worship: see vii. 12-26.

(2) It may be taken for granted that the two prophets named make their complaints either before or soon after the rebuilding had been begun: see Hag. ii. 3; Zech. i. 7, iv. 7-10. We may assume that the work lasted some four or five years. When Tattenai

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[1] *Fundamenta*, p. 50. [2] *Com.* 24. [3] *Wiederherstellung*, 102.
[4] *Geschichte des alten Persien*, 43. [5] *AJSL.* xxiv. 221 n.

and his companions appear on the scene the work had been probably already resumed.

(3) There is abundant evidence in the inscriptions that Darius Hystaspis and his successors interested themselves more in building or helping to build temples consecrated to other gods than their own (Ahura-Mazda), see Jampel, *Wiederherstellung*, 93 ff. We know from the ascertained tenets of Mazdaism and from the actual practice of Mazdaists of the time that such toleration in religious matters as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah imply is exactly what beforehand we might have expected. In the Gadatas inscription[1], discovered in 1889, we have a message sent by this very Darius to Gadatas, Persian governor at Magnesia, Asia Minor, in which the king rebukes this official for not having shown proper respect to the worshippers of Apollo, and especially for having made the priests of this god pay taxes like other people. He says that this deity has spoken to the Persians as well as to the Greeks. See p. 40.

An inscription in the still largely preserved Egyptian temple at Edfu acknowledges gifts by this Darius towards the expenses of the temple[2].

In the Aramaic papyri recently edited by Eduard Sachau[3] it is recorded that the Temple of Yahu at Yeb (Elephantinè), which had existed in the days of the (ancient) kings of Egypt, had been spared by Cambyses, King of Persia, though he did not spare the temples of the native Egyptians, probably because these temples helped to develop the spirit of national independence. We have here an illustration of the special favour shown by the early Persian kings to Yahwism or the religion of Jehovah, no doubt in part because their own religion was closely allied to it.

3. Marquart objects[4] that Palestine was too insignificant a part of the Persian dominions to receive so much consideration. But it must be remembered that, though in itself small, Palestine was the bridge between Egypt and Babylon, and that as such it was of the utmost importance to Persia as a base from which to attack either of these powers. It should be also borne in mind that if Palestine were a smaller country than, say, Egypt, Darius did more on behalf of the religion of Egypt than for that of Palestine.

Parallels to the procedure of Darius in reference to older edicts as a guide for his own conduct are very plentiful in ancient history. In the Tel-el-Amarna tablets there are several such references. Winckler[5] points out that letters belonging to the

[1] See Meyer, *Geschichte*, iii. §§ 26, 34, 57. The inscription is given complete (in German) by Bertholet, *Com.*, p. 26, from *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, xiii. 529.

[2] Lepsius, *Abhandlungen der Berliner Academie*, 1875.

[3] Berlin, 1907, see p. 10.

[4] *Fundamenta*, 48 f.

[5] *KAT.*(3), p. 193.

made in the house of the [a] archives, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at 2
[b] Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a roll, and therein was thus written for a record. In the 3 first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king made a decree; Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the

[a] Aram. *books*. [b] That is, *Ecbatana*.

reign of Amenophis III, King of Egypt (fl. cir. 1500 B.C.), are first heard of in the reign of his successor, who quotes them as supplying precedents or authority for his own actions. See further Jampel, *Wiederherstellung*, 104 f.

VI. 1–5. The Investigation and its Result.

1. Render, 'Then Darius the king made a decree and the archives in the treasure house which (archives) had been brought (to Ecbatana) from Babylon were searched.' The above translation involves only a rearrangement of the words with but one slight exception, the change of 'in' to 'from,' i. e. the substitution of one letter for another greatly resembling it in the old Hebrew and Aramaic script. The changes are supported by a comparison of iv. 27 (treasure house) and of 1 Esd. vi. 23. In the original the verbs are active, not passive, according to a well-known Semitic idiom ('indefinite subject'): see on x. 17.

2. Achmetha: i. e. the Ecbatana of the Greek writers, the capital of Media and the summer residence of the ancient Persian kings. Its present name is Hamadan. See Judith i. 1 ff.; 2 Macc. ix. 3; Tob. iii. 7, vi. 7.

roll: i. e. a clay tablet such as may be seen in the British Museum: so Marquart[1], Bertholet, Jahn, &c. No word for this exists in Aramaic or Hebrew, so that the nearest equivalent in these languages has to be used. Libraries of such tablets have been found at Koyunjik (Nineveh) and elsewhere. Ktesias, however, says (according to Sayce) that Persian official documents were written on parchment rolls which he had seen: see p. 168.

and therein, &c.: render 'and therein was thus written; Memorandum: In the first year of Cyrus the king,' &c. The word rendered **a record** denotes 'take notice' or 'memorandum,' and refers to what follows. We have an exact parallel in the Sachau Aramaic papyri, iii.

3. made a decree, &c.: render 'made a decree as regards the house of God at Jerusalem (which was as follows): Let the house be built where they offer sacrifices and bring offerings made by fire, its height sixty cubits, its breadth sixty cubits' (nothing anent the length).

Concerning: join with the preceding and punctuate as above:

[1] *Fundamenta*, p. 48.

house be builded, the place where they offer sacrifices,
and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height
thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof three-
4 score cubits; with three rows of great stones, and [a] a row

[a] According to the Sept., *one row of timber.*

so LXX, Marti, Bertholet, A. V. The Hebrew accents support the arrangement of words in the R.V.: so Syr. The Hebrew text itself admits of either.

foundations thereof, &c. The M. T. can mean only 'its foundations are borne' (carried) or 'bear' (carry), which yields no suitable meaning. Far better make a trivial change in the vowels, which are no part of the original text, and render as above: 'and (where they) bring offerings made by fire.' So Haupt (Guthe, *SBOT.*), Bertholet, Fried. Delitzsch, Kent. Cf. 1 Esd. iv. 24, 'where they sacrifice with continual fire.' Fire offerings included the burnt offerings, mainly those of animals (Lev. i. 9, &c.), but also meal offerings (Lev. ii. 8, &c.), the sacred bread and frankincense (Lev. xxiv. 7, 9, &c.).

the height ... breadth thereof threescore cubits: nothing is said about the length. Probably we should read 'length' for 'breadth'; in the Aramaic M. T. there is not much difference. Solomon's temple was sixty cubits long by twenty broad, and thirty high (see 1 Kings vi. 2). But this breadth did not include the chambers; adding the latter the breadth of Solomon's temple would be about sixty cubits (see *DB.* 'Temple,' p. 715[a]). If we retain the word height and understand the figures to denote actual measurement, then we must take the height of sixty cubits to refer to the porch and not to the house. In 2 Chron. iii. 4 it is said that the porch of Solomon's temple was 120 cubits high, which would make it more like a tower than a porch. Josephus, following 2 Chron. iii. 4 and the present passage, says that the porch of Solomon's temple was twice as high as that of Zerubbabel[1], but this writer is never critical, and, when numbers are concerned, seldom to be trusted. It must be admitted that these figures constitute a difficulty. Perhaps we should add the length 60 cubits, and understand the edict to denote the utmost limits to which the building could be carried—60 cubits every way[2].

We need not be surprised at the interest taken by Cyrus in the dimensions of the Temple; the Persian kings controlled the religious as well as other affairs of their people.

4. The text is probably greatly shortened, but the meaning seems to be that bounding the outer court (there was but one

[1] *Antiq.* xv. 11. 1.

[2] Sayce thinks that nothing is said about length because the Semitic Temple was proportionately longer than it was broad.

of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: and also let the gold and silver vessels of 5
the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to its place, and thou shalt put them in the house of God. Now therefore, 6
Tattenai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-bozenai, and [a] your companions the Apharsachites, which are

[a] Aram. *their*.

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court in Solomon's temple) of the Temple there was a wall made of three layers of stone, having on the top a layer of cedar planks, gable-shaped, to allow the water to escape. See *DB.* 'Temple,' 702[a].

a row of new timber: read (with LXX, Bertholet, Siegfried, Kent) 'one row of timber': the Aramaic for 'new' and 'one' are almost identical.

the king's house: i.e. the royal treasure house. See on v. 17. What is meant here, however, is that part of the royal revenue which came from the taxes of various kinds (see iv. 13, 20, vii. 24) paid in Transpotamia (see ver. 8). According to ii. 68 (see on and cf. Neh. vii. 70) some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to 'the house of God to restore it,' i.e. perhaps towards restoring the cultus or worship (sacrifices, &c.) The payment promised by Cyrus must have ceased or Tattenai and his companions would have known about it.

5. The M.T. seems corrupt, as is suggested by the changes in the number and person of the Aramaic verbs, yet the general sense is clear.

vessels: see i. 7.

and thou shalt, &c.: the sudden change of persons is striking; if the text is retained, Sheshbazzar must be the person addressed (see i. 11). We have probably only an epitome of what the compiler had before him, and it seems not well made.

6–12. *Darius commands that the Jews be allowed to go on with the building, and that financial help be accorded them.*

The transition from ver. 5 to ver. 6 is abrupt. In the original document some such words as the following must have stood: 'Finding that Cyrus had so decreed, and wishing to carry out the king's undertaking, Darius spoke thus to his Transpotamian rulers.'

6. Tattenai . . . Shethar-bozenai: see on v. 3.

Apharsachites: render 'Persian (officials).' See on iv. 9 and on v. 6.

7 beyond the river, be ye far from thence: let the work
of this house of God alone; let the governor of the
Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of
8 God in its place. Moreover I make a decree what ye
shall do to these elders of the Jews for the building of
this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the
tribute beyond the river, expenses be given with all dili-
9 gence unto these men, that they be not hindered. And
that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and

beyond the river: render 'in Transpotamia'; the expression is a proper name. See on iv. 10.

be ye far from thence: i. e. hold your hands back from Jerusalem: do not hinder the work the Jews are doing at Jerusalem.

7. Here Zerubbabel and the elders join in directing the work. In fact he is an elder (see on v. 2). Siegfried, Bertholet, &c., omit 'the governor of the Jews and' from this verse. See verses 8, 14, where 'elders' alone occurs.

8. The Persian king undertakes to provide the money, but the Jews must see to the work.

goods: the Aramaic word occurs also in vii. 26, and means 'wealth, possessions.' Its sense here is explained by the word **tribute**. See on ver. 4.

beyond the river: see on iv. 10.

with all diligence. The same word is rendered in v. 8 (see on) and in ver. 12 'with diligence.'

that they be not hindered: this rendering, following, the Vulg. and depending on the use of the same verb in iv. 21 (cf. iv. 23), is that of Keil, Oettli, &c. We should, however, probably render with Bertheau, &c., 'So that there be no delay': what is commanded is urgent and must be attended at once.

9. The Jews are to be helped not only in the building, but also in obtaining the materials for sacrifice.

The materials for three kinds of sacrifice are mentioned.

(1) Burnt offerings: bullocks (see below), rams, lambs (see ver. 17 and vii. 17. (2) Oblations, or vegetable (meal) offering: wheat (including oil and salt), see below. (3) Drink offering, wine.

The first kind were always accompanied by the other two in post-exilic times: see Num. xxviii f. and cf. the ancient conception of sacrifice as a social meal (flesh, vegetables, and wine).

young bullocks: render 'oxen.' The word rendered **young** (not found in v. 17) means literally 'sons of,' and in Semitic in such cases is commonly, as here, not to be translated. Thus 'sons of men' (Ps. cvii. 8, see on in *Century Bible*) means simply

rams, and lambs, for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the word of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: that they may offer sacrifices of 10
sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. Also I have made a 11
decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let a beam be pulled out from his house, and let him be lifted up and

'men': see on ii. 41. The noun translated 'bullocks' is that which in its Hebrew form (*shōr*) is translated 'ox,' but which means really a head of cattle, a bull or a cow.

For the law see Lev. iv. 14, where translate 'bull' or 'bullock,' which latter has come to have the same meaning.

the God of heaven: so ver. 10, i. 2, v. 11 f., vii. 12, 23; and the Sachau Aramaic Papyri, i. 2, 22 f. and iii. 3 f.

wheat: for making the fine flour required in the meal offering: see Lev. ii. 1.

salt: used for seasoning the offering: see Lev. ii. 13.

wine: for the drink offering or libation: see Ex. xxix. 40; Lev. xxiii. 13; Joel i. 9.

oil: to mix with the fine flour: see Lev. ii. 1 ff. Siegfried thinks the oil was poured forth as a libation, see Gen. xxviii. 18, xxxv. 14. But wine is here the drink offering.

without fail: Aramaic 'without ceasing,' i.e. 'without intermission.'

10. that they may offer: render 'that they may keep on offering.'

sacrifices of sweet savour: one word in the Aramaic, what is soothing, pleasing to the smell: see Gen. viii. 21. We have the full phrase in the Hebrew of Lev. i. 9, lit. 'an odour of what is tranquillizing to Yahweh.' After the exile incense was burnt on the incense-altar, and some think this is here referred to.

and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons: see Jer. xxix. 7. Similarly at a later time the Jews prayed for the Roman emperor (Philo, *Legat. ad Gaium*, § 45). See further i. 10-12; 1 Macc. vii. 33, xii. 11; 2 Macc. iii. 35, xiii. 23, cf. the Sachau Aramaic Papyri, i. 2 f., 26-28.

11. alter: i.e. act contrary to the law, not change it: cf. Dan. iii. 28. Perhaps we should with 1 Esdras read 'transgress' (*'abar*).

let a beam, &c.: the punishment meant is that of impalement, a living body being spiked *per anum* on a pointed pole: see Num. xxv. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 6, 9, 13, and the note on Esther ii. 23. Darius impaled 3,000 Babylonians when he took the city[1]. This mode of

[1] Her. iii. 159.

fastened thereon; and let his house be made a dung-
12 hill for this: and the God that hath caused his name to dwell there overthrow all kings and peoples, that shall put forth their hand to alter *the same*, to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with all diligence.
13 Then Tattenai, the governor beyond the river, Shethar-bozenai, and their companions, [a] because that Darius the
14 king had sent, did accordingly with all diligence. And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through

[a] Or, *because of that which &c.*

punishment is frequently represented in the bas-reliefs of the Assyrians[1], and existed in Africa at least as late as A. D. 1867[2]. Crucifixion (a Roman custom) does not seem to have had vogue among any Oriental people. In Esther ix. 14 Haman's sons were impaled after they had been put to death (verses 7–10), see below. It must be remembered that stoning was the capital punishment among the Hebrews (Lev. xxiv. 14). The bodies of persons previously put to death were impaled as a warning (see Deut. xxi. 22; Joshua x. 29; 1 Sam. xxxi. 9 f.; 2 Sam. iv. 12). Winckler[3] thinks that only dead persons were impaled: but cf. Num. xxv. 4, where death by impalement seems implied.

a dunghill: see Dan. ii. 5; cf. 2 Kings x. 27. The punishment may seem unreasonably severe, but the Romans imposed a penalty no less rigorous for crossing the Temple precincts at Jerusalem, even when the offender happened to be a Roman citizen. See Meyer, *Entstehung*, 51 f.

12. the God that hath caused his name to dwell there: a Deuteronomic phrase (see Deut. xii. 11, xiv. 22). Why should the king or his principal secretary not be acquainted with the phraseology and even with the recent literature of the Jews?

alter: see on ver. 11.

with all diligence: see on v. 8 and ver. 8.

13–18. *Completion and dedication of the Temple.*

13–15. *Completion of the Temple.*

13. Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai: see on v. 3.

beyond the river: see on iv. 10.

because that, &c.: render 'did exactly according to the command which Darius the king had sent.'

14. elders: see on v. 2.

[1] See *The Bronze Gates of Balawat* (850 B.C.), part iv. [2] Zöckler, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 62 f. [3] *Die Gesetze Hammurabi*, p. 44.

the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was finished 15 on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. And the 16 children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication

through the prophesying of Haggai . . . and Zechariah: according to v. 1 these prophets caused the Jews to set about the building of the Temple. Here we are told that they remained alongside the builders urging and encouraging them to go on with the work.

We have no record of the words uttered by these prophets in the latter part of the four (ver. 15) years covered by the Temple building, neither have we of much which other prophets (Isaiah, &c.) said.

Artaxerxes: the clause containing this name is an obvious interpolation. This king reigned from 465 to 423, and could have had nothing to do with the rebuilding of the Temple completed in 515. The addition is due probably to the marginal note of an ignorant transcriber or to the influence of iv. 7 f. (see on), regarded as part of the account of the building of the Temple. Josephus has in this connexion the name Cambyses[1], which is yet more unlikely to be correct. Here the Jewish historian departs from his great source, 1 Esdras, which throughout this history is very confused and confusing.

15. Adar: the twelfth month = our February-March: see on x. 9, 17. According to the present verse the Temple was completed on the third day of Adar in the year 515. 1 Esd. xii. 5, however, followed by Josephus[2], has the twenty-third day, and Bertholet adopts this, holding that in the Hebrew the numeral 20 has fallen out.

16-18. *Dedication of the Temple.* Bertholet thinks that the Chronicler here resumes his narrative. Instead of the Jews and their elders we have now Israel, priests, &c. We have here, however, to do with a religious function, and one might expect functionaries peculiarly religious to appear on the scene. Besides, where else does the Chronicler write in Aramaic? Assuming the existence of Temple records, they would be of different dates and styles.

16. children of Israel: render 'Israelites,' and see on ii. 41.

children of the captivity: render 'Exiles': see on iv. 1.

the dedication: we must not think here of the Feast of

[1] *Antiq.* xi. 4. 4. [2] *Ibid.* xi. 4. 7.

17 of this house of God with joy. And they offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the
18 number of the tribes of Israel. And they set the priests

Dedication established about 165 B. C. to commemorate the purification and re-dedication of the Temple after its pollution by the Syrians. This latter is kept by Jews in our own time, and is still known by the Hebrew word (*khanukkah*) employed here: see Num. vii. 7, and on Neh. xii. 37.

with joy: in the LXX Psalms cxxxviii, cxlvi–cxlviii are in the title connected with the names of Haggai and Zechariah, probably owing to an ancient tradition that these psalms were composed on the present occasion. They are all of them psalms of thanksgiving and joy.

17. And they offered, &c. Compare with the much larger number of animals offered at the dedication of Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 5, 63.

for a sin offering, &c.: the practice here, understanding the sacrifice to be for the sin of the congregation, differs from the law in Lev. iv. 13 ff., and from that in Num. xv. 22 ff. Here (so viii. 35) twelve he-goats: in the latter passage (ver. 24) a bull (or bullock) is to be offered as a burnt offering and a he-goat as a sin offering. In Lev. iv. 14 one bull (or bullock) is required for the sin offering, but there is not a word about an accompanying burnt offering. These divergences can be explained only as characteristics of different periods. See Bertholet on Lev. iv, and Gray on Num. xv. 22 ff.

sin offering: a sacrifice first mentioned in Ezek. xl. 39, and forming an important part of the P code. It involved the acknowledgement of sin and the need of Divine favour.

18. For details of divisions of priests and courses of Levites see 1 Chron. xxiii–xxvi, where the word translated in this verse **courses** is (in its Heb. form) used of the sub-divisions of Levites and priests. Except in the present verse and in 1 and 2 Chronicles the word does not occur in this sense in the O. T. The Pentateuch is, therefore, silent about these courses unless they are implied in Num. iii, vii. Our books of Chronicles belong in their present form to about 300 B. C., but the incidents they record are of course older, and so are the sources used. We may owe this verse and even (so Bertholet) this whole section (verses 16–18) to the Chronicler, but it is not at all unlikely that we have in the priestly divisions and the Levitical courses the beginnings of the more elaborate sub-divisions. The word rendered **divisions**

in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem ; as it is written in the book of Moses.

19 T And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month. For the 20 priests and the Levites had purified themselves [a] together ; all of them were pure : and they killed the passover for

[a] Heb. *as one.*

occurs (in its Heb. form) but once in Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxv. 5), and not then as here of priests, but of the Levites.

After courses 1 Esd. vii. 7 adds : 'likewise the porters at each door.'

as it is written in the book of Moses : see on iii. 2. According to 1 Chron. xxiii ff., the **divisions** and **courses** are due to David : this represents a late tradition and nothing more.

With ver. 18 the Aramaic section, iv. 8–vi. 18, comes to an end, the Hebrew being resumed in ver. 19.

vi. 19–22. *Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread.*

The Temple is built and the priesthood organized ; a beginning is now made in the observance of the sacred feasts. This is exactly what might have been expected, for no one doubts that the three great feasts had been observed in the land before the destruction of the Temple.

19. See Exod. xiii. 6 ; Lev. xxiii. 5 (both P).

the children of the captivity : see on iv. 1 ; render '(returned) exiles.'

kept the passover : on the observances of the feasts actually recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah, &c., see p. 10.

first month : i. e. Nisan. Before the exile the year began in the autumn with the month subsequently and still called Tishri, Nisan being the seventh month. Soon after the exile the Assyrian-Babylonian names and the habit of beginning the year in the spring (Nisan) became general. At a later time, however, the older custom, still in vogue, of beginning the year with Tishri in the autumn came in.

20. For, &c. : the Passover was now observed because the priests and Levites had purified themselves. See 2 Chron. xxxv. 6.

According to the ancient law (Exod. xii. 21–27) the Passover was a domestic rite at which the head of the house officiated. The Deuteronomic code (Deut. xvi. 1–8 ; cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 23) required that this feast should be kept at the sanctuary, the priests officiating. The P code (Exod. xii. 1–20) made the feast once more domestic and lay, and it is this law which modern Jews follow,

all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the
21 priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of the captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD, the God of
22 Israel, did eat, and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

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without, however, the prescribed sacrifice, though a semblance of the paschal lamb is still kept up in the *Keppurah*. In the present instance the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are combined (not so in JE); the first is kept apparently at the Central Sanctuary, Levites officiating. The P code does not appear to have become as yet operative, even if it existed: see p. 10.

children of the captivity: see on iv. 1. The expression seems here to denote the lay members of the community.

21. children of Israel: render 'Israelites.' See on ii. 41 and iv. 1.

and all such, &c.: not heathen proselytes as some hold (see Meyer, *Entstehung*, &c., p. 129 f.), but home-staying Jews who had married non-Jewish wives and proved otherwise unfaithful to the religion of their fathers, but who now returned to the old faith, abandoning their heathen wives (see x. 11). Some recent critics (Bertholet, Torrey, Kent, &c.) hold that such a putting away of heathen wives took place first not in 515 B. C., as the present narrative implies, but in the time of Ezra (say 458 B. C.): see ix. 1, x. 11; Neh. x. 29. The Chronicler is thought to have antedated this reforming movement. Surely, however, there must have been enough remembrance of the teaching of Deuteronomy (see on x. 1) to suggest the desirability of such a step.

to seek the LORD: see on iv. 2.

22. the feast of unleavened bread: originally quite distinct from the Passover: see Exod. xxxiii. 15. In the D code they appear to be regarded as one. See Deut. xvi. 2 f.

the king of Assyria: i. e. Darius I, so called because his dominions included Assyria. Perhaps the phrase has in it an implied compliment to the Persian king thus described. See Neh. xiii. 6 where Artaxerxes I is called 'King of Babylon.'

Kings of Assyria in the strict sense had treated Israel in a very different way (see Isa. xxxvi–xxxix); what wonders had God

wrought on behalf of His people! It is possible that Assyria appears instead of Persia (ver. 15) through a copyist's error, for as an independent power Assyria had long since passed away. We know, however, that Cyrus gloried in the title 'King of Babylon,' and Artaxerxes is so called in Neh. xiii. 6.

VII–X + Neh. vii. 73[b]–x. 39.

Second Portion of the Book. Ezra's Arrival at Jerusalem and what he did there.

Between chaps. vi and vii there is a period of nearly sixty years, about which the Bible is silent. Nor have we contemporary or any other reliable records as to the condition or doings of the Jews during these years. It was, however, in these apparently barren years that the priestly code was elaborated by the priests who had not left Babylon, and that part at least of Isa. xl. ff. was composed and put together—also in Babylon. It is singular that the latest editors of Ezra-Nehemiah should jump over this space of time. Perhaps, indeed, in the original draft of the history this gap did not exist. There must have been at one time state, temple, and other records dealing with the period, which however appear to have been lost quite early. Though little is told us in the present section of the state of things when Ezra arrived, much may be gathered from what is said in Nehemiah of the condition of the country thirteen years later, when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem. Neh. v. 1–15 shows that Jerusalem was in a bad way. Capitalists acted unjustly and cruelly towards their debtors; the governors immediately before Nehemiah were extortionate and unsympathetic. Religiously matters were even worse. It seems evident that this description applies more or less for decades before Nehemiah received permission to act the reformer among his own people. It was no doubt a knowledge of the state of matters at and about Jerusalem that induced Ezra also to seek and obtain permission to go to Jerusalem to teach the law of God and to re-establish religious institutions.

We read no more of Zerubbabel, and we have no certain information as to what became of him. Tradition has it that he returned to the Persian court, where he remained. It has not been proved, though it has been affirmed, that he accepted the rôle of Davidic king, and even that of Messiah. See on v. 2.

vii f. *Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem; incidents of the journey* || 1 Esd. viii. 1–64 (66).

vii. 1–10 || 1 Esd. viii. 1 7. *Introductory narrative giving in brief a summary of what follows in verses* 11–28. Perhaps originally verses 11–28 were written on a special parchment, to which verses 1–10 were attached as a docket or title.

7 [T_E] Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes
king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah,
2 the son of Hilkiah, the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok,
3 the son of Ahitub, the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah,
4 the son of Meraioth, the son of Zerahiah, the son of
5 Uzzi, the son of Bukki, the son of Abishua, the son of
Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief

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1. Now after these things: a phrase in common use in Heb. (Gen. xv. 1, &c.), and meaning simply that what is going to be related took place subsequently to what has been related. In Semitic, as in the classical languages, paragraphs and sentences are linked by connecting particles and phrases, which in English would have no external mark of connexion.

Artaxerxes, i. e. Artaxerxes I, Longimanus (465–423). Other opinions have been held and defended; see the larger commentaries. It is at all events clear that the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah (see Neh. ii. 1) is the above king, since Nehemiah was governor of Judah in the time of the high-priest Eliashib, grandson of Joshua, high-priest in 520 (Neh. iii. 1, xii. 16): Artaxerxes II, Mnemon (404–359), lived at too late a time to make this possible. That the compiler and final editor of Ezra-Nehemiah took this Artaxerxes to be Longimanus seems almost certain, for he would otherwise have differentiated in some way the king mentioned in this verse. See on Neh. ii. 1.

From 1^b to the end of ver. 5 we have the genealogy of Ezra. But the list is obviously a greatly curtailed one, for only fifteen individuals are mentioned in the line of descent from Aaron to Ezra, i. e. for the space of some 900 or 1,000 years. Probably *ben* (='son') is to be understood in the sense of 'descendant.' Ezra cannot in the ordinary sense be the **son of Seraiah,** since the latter died about 586 B. C. according to 2 Kings xxv. 18–21, though of course another person of the same name might have lived a century or so later. See on v. 1, viii. 2, and Neh. xii. 23. The name **Ezra** (='help') as it stands, an Aramaic form, is probably a contraction of *Ezaryahu* '(one whom) Yahweh helps.' Cf. Nehemiah ='(one whom) Yahweh comforts,' and Isaiah (Heb. *Yesha'yahu*) ='(one whom) Yahweh delivers.' The name is borne by others, see Neh. xii. 1, 13, 33.

5. Aaron the chief priest: the purpose of the genealogy was to show Ezra's descent from Aaron. In the older sources (J, E, D Aaron is Moses' spokesman (Exod. iv. 14, xxiv. 1) and a priest (Deut. x. 6, J, E, not D).

The words rendered **chief priest** mean literally the 'head

priest: this Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was 6
a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD, the
God of Israel, had given: and the king granted him all
his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God
upon him. And there went up some of the children of 7
Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the
singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim, unto Jeru-
salem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. And 8

priest,' and occur in 2 Sam. xv. 27 (Wellhausen rejects them here), 2 Kings xxv. 18 (= Jer. lii. 24), and some half-dozen times in 2 Chronicles. In the P code the expression is 'the great priest,' E.VV 'the high priest': see Lev. xxi. 10; Num. xxxv. 25, 28, &c. In earlier times he is called simply 'the priest': see 2 Kings xi. 9 f. Though it is in post-exilic times that the high-priest became an important functionary, there is abundance of evidence that such an official existed before the exile: see *DB.* iv. 73, 79 ff. (Baudissin). Yet it is singular that in Ezekiel's programme of religious institutions and offices (Ezek. xl-xlvi) the high-priesthood finds no place, probably because it had not yet become a vital part of the ecclesiastical system.

6–10. *The return of Ezra and his companions.*

6. went up, i. e. to Jerusalem. See ver. 7, ii. 1, and viii. 1.

ready: lit. 'quick.'

scribe: originally a secular official, state secretary; see 2 Sam. viii. 17, xx. 35; 1 Kings iv. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 18, xxii. 3, &c. In the beginning of the Deuteronomic period, when through the finding of the book of the law in the Temple the written word acquired a fresh importance, the term came to be used for one who studied and taught as well as copied the law. Though the sense 'writer' is the oldest, that of 'interpreter' became more and more its principal meaning. In post-exilic times the scribes grew to be a very important section of the people, such as they were in our Lord's day.

the law of Moses: see on iii. 2. The reference is, however, here especially to the law which Ezra had brought with him from Babylon (ver. 14): see p. 8 ff.

according to the hand, &c.: the phrase = 'according to Yahweh's helpfulness towards him,' and is characteristic of the Ezra memoirs from which the present narrative is extracted. See verses 9, 28; viii. 18, 22, 31; and also Neh. ii. 8, 18. Cf 'the eye of their God,' v. 5, and see 2 Chron. xxx. 12.

7. For the classes here mentioned see ii. 36 ff.

in the seventh year of Artaxerxes: i. e. in 458.

he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in
9 the seventh year of the king. For upon the first *day*
of the first month [a] began he to go up from Babylon,
and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to
Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon
10 him. For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the

[a] Heb. *that was the foundation of the going up.*

8. the fifth month: i.e. Ab (Abib), corresponding to our July or August.

Since Nehemiah arrived in the twentieth year of this king (Neh. ii. 1), there was a space of thirteen years between the two arrivals (458–445).

Wellhausen thinks that Ezra arrived in the twenty-seventh year (i. e. 427), the number twenty having fallen out. Van Hoonacker, who agrees with Kosters in making Ezra's visit subsequent to Nehemiah's, says Artaxerxes II, Mnemon (404–359), is the king meant in ver. 7; see on ver. 7. Winckler, in different parts of the same volume (*Altor. Forschungen*, ii. 222, 242), argues inconsistently for two different dates, viz. in the reigns of Cambyses and Darius.

9. began: it is better to vocalize the Heb. as in Esther i. 8 ('so the king *had appointed*,' &c.), and to translate 'decided' or 'arranged.' Though the journey was decided upon on the first day of the first month it was not actually begun before eleven days later: see viii. 32. The time taken for the journey would be about 108 days, reckoning from the twelfth day of Nisan (viii. 31) to the first day of Ab. The distance from Babylon to Jerusalem in a straight line is about 300 miles. But travelling in the East, especially in those times, was difficult as well as dangerous; and the Jews now had much valuable baggage to carry and to care about. Besides, to avoid the desert, Ezra's caravan had to make a detour by Carchemish. Ryle calculates that the actual distance covered was fully 900 miles. The arrival would take place about August (Ab) in the year 458. See Ryle (*in loco*) and Meyer, *Entstehung*, 239.

10. Why did Ezra set about that long journey? We have the answer in this verse.

to seek: see on iv. 2. Two Hebrew words are translated 'seek' in the English Bible. The one (*darash*) = 'to seek knowledge,' 'to search,' and is cognate with *midrash* (an investigation of the sense of Scripture). The other (*biqqesh*) = 'to seek for what is lost.' It is the first that is used here and in iv. 2, and vi. 21. Both verbs occur in Ps. cv. 4 (see on in *Century Bible*).

Here the meaning seems to be to recognize Yahweh's law and that of no other god. The next clause (to act according to the law then recognized) supports this interpretation.

LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgements.

[T_{EA}] Now this is the copy of the letter that the king 11
Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even the scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel. [a] Artaxerxes, king of kings, 12
unto Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect and so forth. I make a decree, that all 13

[a] Ch. vii. 12–26 is in Aramaic.

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to teach: this was the special function of the *sopher* or scribe: see on ver. 5.

11–26 (‖ 1 Esd. viii. 8-24). *The decree of Artaxerxes authorizing Ezra to return and reorganize Judaism.*

11. *Introductory* (Hebrew).

Now: the connecting particle (see on ver. 1), not the time-adverb 'now.'

copy: see on iv. 11.

letter: see on iv. 7.

Ezra the priest: see genealogy, verses 1–5. He is so called in x. 10, 16, Neh. viii. 2, and also in the title to Ezra and 1 Esdras in the *Luc.* In later times and perhaps here 'the priest' = 'the high-priest': so Neh. xiii. 4, 1 Chron. xvi. 39. and often in P.

the scribe: see on ver. 6. He is so called in Neh. viii. 4, 13, xii. 36. The two titles 'the priest' and 'the scribe' are found together not only here but also in verses 12, 21, Neh. viii. 9, xii. 26.

12–26. *Contents of the King's Letter* (Aramaic).

12. king of kings: Darius is so described in the Gadatas inscription. See p. 102.

God of heaven: see on i. 2.

perfect: the Aramaic word has the force of our '&c.' Orientals (Arabs, &c.) are in the habit, when addressing persons of distinction, of heaping up epithets to an extent that is hardly credible to Western minds. Even our German neighbours will write on an envelope: 'To the high born, learned, and very honoured A.B.C.' After **scribe** the word rendered **perfect** (lit. what is to be completed) means: 'and the other titles of respect.' In Rabbinical Heb. a form of this word with the conjunction = 'and' prefixed is used (often abbreviated) as our '&c.'

and so forth: render (wrote) 'as follows': see on iv. 10.

13. I make a decree: see iv. 19, vi. 8, 11.

all they, &c.: see i. 3.

they of the people of Israel, and their priests and the Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own free
14 will to go to Jerusalem, go with thee. Forasmuch as thou art sent [a] of the king and his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to
15 the law of thy God which is in thine hand; and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habita-
16 tion is in Jerusalem, and all the silver and gold that thou

[a] Aram. *from before the king.*

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with thee: Ezra had to be director of the work.

14-16. Ezra was commissioned (1) to make inquiries about the state of Judah and Jerusalem (ver. 14); (2) to carry with him the gifts of the king and his counsellors and other contributions.

14. seven counsellors: according to Herodotus (iii. 84) the heads of the seven principal families in Persia formed a kind of privy council to advise the king in affairs of moment. Each of these had the privilege of access to the king. See Esther i. 14. Seven among the Persians, as among the Hebrews, was a sacred number: cf. the heavenly court consisting of Ahuramazda and the six Amesha spentas, or, according to another conception, the seven Amesha spentas, the Supreme Good Spirit named being one. The Divine court formed perhaps the pattern for the human.

Judah and Jerusalem: see on v. 1.

law . . . hand: the reference must be to some code freshly brought by Ezra from Babylon and previously unknown to Jews residing already in Judah. That this code concerned itself almost, if not exclusively, with the religious side of the nation's life goes without saying, but as to what exactly it contained has been matter of much discussion, and must remain so with our present data. That it did not coincide with our Pentateuch or with the Priestly Code is, however, among the things which cannot be doubted. See p. 8 ff.

15 f. The contributions towards the Temple and its services which Ezra was to take with him were to be of three kinds: (1) The gold and silver given by the king and his (seven) counsellors; (2) the gifts of non-Jewish, and (3) of Jewish residents in Babylon. Cf. the decree of Cyrus to restore the gold and silver vessels removed from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: see on i. 6-11 and cf. v. 14 and vi. 5. Ezra showed no scruple in accepting the financial help of Gentiles.

shalt find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem; therefore thou shalt with all diligence buy with this 17
money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meal offerings and their drink offerings, and shalt offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee and to thy 18
brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do ye after the will of your God. And the vessels that 19
are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. And whatso- 20
ever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. And I, even I Artaxerxes 21

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16. offering willingly, &c.: that the king in writing to Jews about religious affairs should adopt this religious phraseology is exactly what might have been expected from a Persian monarch of the time: see on vi. 12.

17 f. The money thus obtained was to be used in providing the material for sacrifice (ver. 17; cf. Joel i. 8–12) and in meeting other needs (ver. 18).

17. On the species of sacrifices here enumerated see on vi. 9 and also on vi. 17.

18. the will of your God: as revealed in the law which Ezra was to bring with him: see p. 8 ff.

19. the vessels, &c.: not those granted by Cyrus (i. 7), but those enumerated in viii. 25–27.

deliver: Schultz, Siegfried, Bertholet, and others render 'deliver completely,' 'hand over wholly.' The usage in Syriac supports this. The extent of the gift is stated in ver. 22.

the God of Jerusalem: a strange and unparalleled expression. Probably we should read with Guthe (*SBOT.*) 'the God of Israel who is at Jerusalem,' or with *Luc.*, 'thy God who is at Jerusalem.'

20. the king's treasure house: i. e. the treasury of the satrap of Transpotamia, where the taxes collected in the satrapy were kept until they were transmitted to the principal royal fiscus at Susa.

the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of
22 you, it be done with all diligence, unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred [a] measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of
23 oil, and salt without prescribing how much. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and

[a] Aram. *cors.*

21. treasurers: the treasurers of the sub-satrapies of Transpotamia: see on iv. 8. These would severally have charge of the taxes until they were transferred to the principal treasury of the province, whence in due time they were taken to Susa, local expenses, and in this case the gifts to the Jews, being in all cases deducted and accounted for.

God of heaven: see on i. 2.

with all diligence: see on v. 8 and vi. 8.

22. The utmost limit of the help which Ezra may receive from the public purse.

hundred talents of silver: slightly over £35,000, according to Meyer. A Persian talent weighed, according to Benzinger (*Arch.*(2), 201), about 34,000 kilogrammes (see on viii. 26). Meyer (*Entstehung*, 69 n.) says that sums almost fabulously large were preserved in the Persian exchequer.

an hundred measures (Aram. 'corin') **of wheat:** about 1,000 bushels.

an hundred baths of wine: about 800 gallons.

salt being very plentiful, and therefore cheap, could be obtained in any quantity. On the place of **salt** in the sacrificial system see on vi. 9.

23. Note the terms of respect with which Artaxerxes speaks of the Jewish God, and see on i. 2.

exactly: the original word is Persian and should probably (with Marquart, Andreas, &c.) be translated 'promptly.'

for why, &c.: render, 'that there be no anger (on the part of Yahweh) to the detriment of the kingdom of the king and his sons.'

for why, &c.: the words may and here should be rendered, as above, 'lest,' &c.

wrath: just as Artaxerxes feared to incur the anger of Yahweh, the national God of Israel, so the Israelites themselves

his sons? Also we certify you, that touching any of the 24
priests and Levites, the singers, porters, Nethinim, or
servants of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to
impose tribute, custom, or toll, upon them. And thou, 25
Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand,
appoint magistrates and judges, which may judge all the
people that are beyond the river, all such as know the
laws of thy God; and teach ye him that knoweth them
not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and 26
the law of the king, let judgement be executed upon him

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had a great fear of offending Chemosh, the national deity of Moab. See 2 Kings iii. 27. Perhaps to the Persian king, as a Mazdaist, Yahweh was his own supreme deity (Ahuramazda) as he revealed himself to the Jews.

24. *Temple officials are not to be taxed.*

priests . . . Nethinim: see on ii. 36 ff.

or servants, &c.: render, 'even (all) the servants of,' &c. The words are a summing up of the classes mentioned. The same Aram. (and Heb.) word (*waw*) stands for 'and,' 'or,' 'even,' &c.

tribute, &c.: see on iv. 13. According to the Gadatas inscription (see on vi. 1-12) the priests of Apollo were to be exempted from paying taxes, just as here the priests, &c., are exempted. Yet some think that in the present case it is unlikely. Why?

25. after the wisdom, &c.: i.e. 'according to thy God's law,' &c. See on ver. 14. What, if any, is the difference between the magistrates and judges whom Ezra was to appoint over the Jews of Transpotamia? Meyer says that two synonyms are used for the sake of emphasis, and Bertholet fails to see any difference of meaning between the two words. Perhaps the word translated **judges** (*shaphetîn*) has in it here something of its original meaning 'rulers.' Probably, however, it is a marginal gloss.

judge: the verb here is cognate with the word rendered 'magistrates,' a reason for regarding the two classes noticed above as having identical functions. It is evident from the words which follow that these officials were to have jurisdiction over the Jews alone of Transpotamia.

26. the law of thy God, and . . . of the king: so far as the Jews of the province were concerned the king, by adopting the Jewish code, made it his own, so that disobedience towards Ezra's new law exposed the individual guilty of it to the penalties annexed to infringement of Persian law.

with all diligence, whether it be unto death, or to [a] banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

27 [E] Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify
28 the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem; and hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened according to the hand of the LORD my God upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

[a] Aram. *rooting out.*

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banishment: Aram. 'uprooting.' The cognate verb in Ps. lii. 5 is rendered 'and root thee (out of the land of the living).' The sense here is probably 'excommunication,' not 'banishment': see x. 8.

27 f. *Ezra's Doxology* (Hebrew). This is perhaps a Psalm composed by Ezra to be sung after the receipt of the king's decree. It comes in rather abruptly after ver. 26. Originally there were, it seems likely, some words of introduction to verses 27 f., such as 'And Ezra spake these words after he had received the royal decree.'

27. God of our fathers: the God who helped our fathers has shown Himself our Helper: see viii. 28, x. 11; 1 Chron. xxix. 18; 2 Chron. xx. 6. Cf. Acts iii. 13, and Doddridge's hymn, 'O God of Bethel,' 'God of our fathers be the God of their succeeding race.'

hath put . . . in the king's heart: see Neh. ii. 12, vii. 5; 1 Kings x. 24.

to beautify: the sense is to restore the Temple to the glory which it had before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. So Sellin, Siegfried.

28. mercy: render, 'loving kindness'; the Aram. word has in it no implication of guilt. See 'Psalms,' vol. i, p. 360, *Century Bible.* For the phrase 'extend loving kindness' see ix. 9; Gen. xxxix. 21.

unto me: the use of the first person in the Ezra memoirs begins here.

his counsellors: see on ver. 14.

VIII. 1–14 (= 1 Esd. viii. 28–40).

List of those who returned with Ezra.

For general remarks on the lists of Ezra-Nehemiah see Introd. to II and notes on the various sections and verses of that chapter. In the present list the clerical element takes precedence

Now these are the heads of their fathers' *houses*, and 8
this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from
Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king. Of the 2
sons of Phinehas, Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar,
Daniel: of the sons of David, Hattush. Of the sons of 3

---

of the lay, the priests being named first (ver. 2), the lay clans afterwards (verses 3-14). It is so in x. 18 ff. and in Neh. x. 3 ff. But in Ezra ii and Neh. vii the lay clans are mentioned first. The difference may be due to the pre-eminence of the lay leaders in the first century after the return. The power of the priests grew rapidly after the introduction of Ezra's law, itself the work of the priestly school in Babylon.

The list in verses 1–14 has been shortened, and mistakes have evidently crept in; perhaps all this is to be ascribed to the ignorance or carelessness of copyists or to the imperfect state of the parchment and writing before them.

The following plan may be yet traced, and it is likely that in the original draft it was uniformly followed: (1) The name of the clan; (2) that of its chief; (3) the number belonging to the clan that returned with Ezra. Where the M.T. falls short, judged by this scheme, the defect can be generally made good from the LXX or 1 Esdras or both.

The sum total, according to the M.T., is 1,496; according to 1 Esdras it is 1,690. The discrepancy arises from the following differences in details: the Adin clan, Ezra (ver. 6) 50, 1 Esd. (ver. 32) 250; Shephatiah, Ezra (ver. 7) 80, 1 Esd. (ver. 34) 70; Joab, Ezra (ver. 9) 218, 1 Esd. (ver. 35) 212; Adonikam, Ezra (ver. 13) 60, 1 Esd. (ver. 39) 70. Correcting the M.T. by 1 Esdras as above, we obtain the number 1,692, as against the sum total of 1,690 in 1 Esdras.

1. Now: see on vii. 11.

heads of their fathers' houses: see on i. 5.

the genealogy: see on ii. 62.

2. The priestly clans are mentioned first, then the royal David clan. On the meaning of house or clan see p. 52 f.

Phinehas: son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron.

Ithamar: youngest son of Aaron: Exod. vi. 23; 1 Chron. v. 29.

Gershom and **Daniel** are heads of the Phinehas and Ithamar clans, and not the only priests in the company (see ver. 24). Ezra himself belonged to the Phinehas clan (see vii. 1–5).

Daniel: called Gamaliel (or Gamael?) in 1 Esd. 29. Daniel is the name in Neh. viii. 29. Perhaps the clan had two names.

Hattush, &c. Join with the next verse and render 'Hattush the son of Shecaniah.' So 1 Esd. viii. 29; cf. 1 Chron. iii. 22,

Shecaniah; of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah: and with
him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred
4 and fifty. Of the sons of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai the
son of Zerahiah; and with him two hundred males.
5 Of the sons of Shecaniah, the son of Jahaziel; and with
6 him three hundred males. And of the sons of Adin,
Ebed the son of Jonathan; and with him fifty males.
7 And of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah;
8 and with him seventy males. And of the sons of Shepha-
tiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael; and with him four-
9 score males. Of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son
of Jehiel; and with him two hundred and eighteen
10 males. And of the sons of Shelomith, the son of Josi-
phiah; and with him an hundred and threescore males.
11 And of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai;

---

where this Hattush is grandson of Shecaniah. 'Son' often means grandson and descendant: see on vii. 1–5.

3–14. *The lay clans.* All these are represented in the list of those who returned with Zerubbabel in 537 (see ii. 2 ff.) with the exception of Shecaniah (ver. 5) and Shelomith (ver. 10), whose presence in this list as clans is due to textual corruption, see on verses 5 and 10.

The number of the lay clans is twelve, corresponding to the twelve tribes from which the nation was supposed to have sprung: see on ii. 2.

3. This verse must begin with **Of the sons of Parosh**: see on ver. 2.

males: in ch. ii and Neh. vii females are included in the reckoning.

5. Read and render, 'Of the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel': so LXX (not *Luc.*), 1 Esd. viii. 32. Zattu is mentioned in ii. 8 and Neh. vii. 13, but Shecaniah occurs in no list as a clan.

6. fifty: 1 Esd. viii. 32 gives 250.

8. fourscore: in 1 Esd. viii. 34 it is 70.

9. two hundred and eighteen: 1 Esd. viii. 35 gives 212.

10. Read and render, 'And of the sons of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah.' So LXX and 1 Esd. viii. 36. *Luc.* has a conflate reading, 'And the son of Shelomith, Banais the son of Josiphiah.' We do not read elsewhere of a clan Shelomith, though of one Bani we read in ii. 10 and Neh. vii 15 (Bennui).

and with him twenty and eight males. And of the 12
sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan; and with
him an hundred and ten males. And of the sons of 13
Adonikam, *that were* the last; and these are their
names, Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, and with them
threescore males. And of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and 14
[a] Zabbud; and with them seventy males.

And I gathered them together to the river that 15
runneth to Ahava; and there we encamped three days:
and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there

[a] Another reading is, *Zaccur.*

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13 f. In previous cases after the name of the clan (house) the head of it is mentioned. In ver. 13 three names are given instead of the usual one, and in ver. 14 two. Moreover, in ver. 13 there occurs a Hebrew word rendered in the E.VV. '*that were* the last,' but which, restoring to the Hebrew the article (found in *Luc.* and 1 Esd. viii. 39), is more accurately rendered 'those who came after.' The name of the head of the members of the clan that came with Ezra was unknown, but instead the historian gives the names of three successive heads belonging to later generations. The same word is probably to be understood in ver. 14, where two later heads are mentioned. Perhaps the Hebrew text is corrupt, or the word may have in this register a technical sense now lost.

The commonest view is that the elder branch of the clan arrived with Zerubbabel (ii. 13) and that now the younger comes with Ezra. But why are three heads mentioned here and nowhere else?

15-36. The Assembling of the Party: the Journey: the Arrival at Jerusalem (1 Esd. viii. 41-64 (66)).

15-20. *The assembly. Absence of Levites.*

15. to the river that runneth to Ahava: 'to the running river (i. e.) to Ahava'; probably in contrast to the stagnant canals about Babylon. Where this running river exactly was we have no means of knowing, though it must have been a branch of the Euphrates and in the vicinity of Babylon. That Ahava was a river appears from verses 21, 31. It is called 'Theras' in 1 Esd. viii. 41. The cognate Babylonian word (*nâru*) means also 'canal' which Sayce thinks must be meant here. The verb translated 'run' means lit. 'to come' or 'go.'

I viewed: cf. Neh. viii. 7.

people: i. e. the laity.

16 none of the sons of Levi. Then sent I for Eliezer, for
Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and
for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for
Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elna-
17 than, [a] which were teachers. And [b] I sent them forth unto
Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia; and I told them
what they should say unto [c] Iddo, *and* his brethren the

[a] Or, *which had understanding* [b] Another reading is, *I gave them commandment.* [c] The text as pointed has, *Iddo, his brother.*

found there none of the sons of Levi: see for the reason general remarks on ii. 40–58. According to 1 Esd. viii. 42 and *Luc.* there were neither priests nor Levites, but the context in Ezra (ver. 2, &c.) and in 1 Esd. (viii. 29, &c.) shows that priests were with Ezra from the beginning. The fact that there was at this time as well as at the time of the first expedition under Zerubbabel and Jeshua a dearth of Levites is one of those 'undesigned coincidences' which support the veracity of Ezra ii and the present context. Had Ezra's work followed that of Nehemiah, as v. Hoonacker, &c., hold, the same conditions are less likely to have presented themselves, the distance in time from Cyrus being 80 and 140 years, or the two dates of Ezra's arrival.

16. for: omit in each case. The preposition (*l*) so translated is in Hebrew often and in Aramaic regularly used to introduce the accusative (see Ges.-Kautzsch[26] § 117 n.). Ezra sent Eliezer, Ariel, &c. (v. 17), to Iddo, &c. So *Luc.*, Pesh., Vulg., and modern commentators. The LXX (not *Luc.*) and 1 Esdras agree with the E.VV.

Elnathan: the double mention of this name in the same verse must be due to a copyist's error.

teachers: lit. 'those who caused to understand.' Dr. Adolf Rosenzweig[1], followed hesitatingly by Bertholet, thinks that there was in Babylon a class distinct from priests and Levites, whose special province it was to teach the law. But the fact that in almost every case this very word is used in describing the work of the Levite goes far to show that no special class of the kind indicated existed. See Neh. viii. 7, 9; 1 Chron. xv. 22; xxv. 8, &c. Besides, if there were such a separate body of officials, why have we no clear reference to it? The same word in Neh. viii. 2, x. 29, means 'those who discern.'

17. I sent, &c.: render, 'I gave them a commission (or 'commandment') to Iddo, head over (the Jewish colony) at the place Casiphia (a Jewish centre in Babylon); and I told them (lit.

[1] *Das Jahrhundert nach dem babylon. Exile,* Berlin, 1885.

Nethinim, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring
unto us ministers for the house of our God. And accord- 18
ing to the good hand of our God upon us they brought
us [a] a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli, the son of
Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and
his brethren, eighteen; and Hashabiah, and with him 19
Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their
sons, twenty; and of the Nethinim, whom David and 20
the princes had given for the service of the Levites,

[a] Or, *Ishsechel*

'put into their mouth,' cf. Exod. iv. 15) what they were to say to Iddo and his brethren the Levites and the Nethinim,' &c.

The Hebrew text must be changed, for as it stands it means 'to Iddo and his brother the Nethinim.' The changes to this from the fuller text, implied in the above translation, could be easily made by a copyist, as a student of the original will see.

We do not know anything further than this verse tells us of this Iddo or of the Jewish settlement at Casiphia.

ministers: the word is general, and can include priests (Num. iii. 6, &c.) as well as Levites, Nethinim, &c. The LXX (not *Luc.*), misreading one Hebrew consonant, reads 'singers.'

18. according to the good hand of our God: see on vii. 6.

a man of discretion: read 'Ishsechel' as R. Vm., a proper name parallel to Sherebiah. For a similar proper name see 2 Sam. x. 6, Ish-tob (A. V.), not 'men of Tob' as R. V. (see Kittel and Budde on). Why call an unnamed Levite 'a discreet man'? Were the other Levites 'indiscreet'?

Mahli was son of Merari (Exod. vi. 16, 19) and therefore grandson of Levi. For 'son' (*ben*) = descendant see on vii. 1-5.

19. with him: we have here simply the sign of the accusative (they brought . . . Jeshaiah), with the wrong vowels inserted. So LXX (not *Luc.*), 1 Esdras, Guthe, Bertholet.

his (brethren): read 'their': so 1 Esd. (*Luc.*) viii. 47, Guthe, Bertholet; cf. '*their* sons.'

20. Nethinim: see on ii. 43-54.

given: the Hebrew word (*nathan*) is used with a reference to the current view of the etymology of Nethinim (persons *given* or *devoted* to God).

service: i. e. religious service. The same Hebrew word has this sense in Exod. xxx. 16 and xxxviii. 21. The Nethinim were to help the Levites in the work of the sanctuary, see Ezek. xlix. 9-14 and on ii. 40-55.

two hundred and twenty Nethinim: all of them were
21 expressed by name. Then I proclaimed a fast there, at
the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before
our God, to seek of him a straight way, for us, and for
22 our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was
ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horse-
men to help us against the enemy in the way: because
we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our

expressed: lit. 'perforated, punctured, marked with a point.' See Lev. xxiv. 11 (cf. Dillmann and Baentsch on); Num. i. 17; 1 Chron. xii. 31, &c. The sense seems to be that in a complete register the names of these persons were ticked off to indicate the presence of the persons.[1] Rabbinical writers say the verb came to mean simply 'to name,' and it is so rendered here by the Syr., Vulg., 'were called by their names.' See on x. 16.

21–30. *Preparations for the journey.* The incidents related in verses 15–30 must have taken place during the three days of encampment at the river Ahava (ver. 15), i. e. from 9th to 12th Nisan (ver. 31).

21–23. *The fast.* Fasting is here a sign of humiliation before God and an acknowledgement of dependence upon Him during the journey about to be begun: see Dan. x. 12; Ps. xxxv. 13. Similarly, before going forth to war, it was the custom to offer sacrifice to Yahweh (1 Sam. vii. 9; 1 Macc. iii. 47, &c.). The fasting and the sacrificing constituted a prayer for help.

21. I proclaimed a fast: see x. 6; Neh. viii. 1; 2 Chron. xx. 3; Isa. i. 13; Joel i. 14, &c. The verb here (=to 'call out') is particularly used of proclaiming feast and fast days. See i. 1 for another verb which with a noun is translated 'made proclamation' (see on i. 1).

a straight way: i. e. a prosperous journey; see Isa. xl. 3, which is probably referred to, and where the same word occurs.

little ones: render, 'wives and little ones.' The Hebrew word used has, according to Dillmann (see on Exod. xii. 37), the sense 'wives and children' in the Pentateuch source E, and it is perfectly right, with Bertholet, to give it that wider sense here. See Holzinger, *Hexateuch*, p. 287; see also Num. xxxii. 16, 17, 24; Judges xviii. 21.

substance: see on i. 4, where the word is translated 'goods.'

22. a band, &c.: Nehemiah did not scruple to accept such protection: Neh. ii. 9.

enemy: i. e. Bedouin and other robbers such as travellers encounter to-day. No special foe is thought of.

[1] See Additional Notes, p. 363.

God is upon all them that seek him, for good ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.
So we fasted and besought our God for this : and he was 23
intreated of us. Then I separated twelve of the chiefs of 24
the [a] priests, [b] even Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, and weighed unto them the silver, 25
and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering for the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his princes, and all Israel there present, had offered :
I even weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty 26
talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents ; of

[a] In Neh. xii. 24, *Levites.* [b] Or, *besides*

The hand of our God: see on vii. 6.

seek: the Hebrew word here denotes in general to seek for something that has been lost, and not to seek to know about : see on iv. 2 and vii. 10.

24–30. *Guardians appointed for the gifts and offerings.*

24. Render, 'Then I set apart twelve of the chiefs of the priests, together with Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them.' Ezra selected two groups of twelve, one being priests, the other Levites, as is implied in ver. 30. On the number 12 see p. 51.

chiefs of the priests: not high-priests, but leading members of the priestly class: lit. 'princes of the priests.'

even: for the prep. (*l*) in Hebrew, which introduces the accusative see on ver. 16 ; but read here with 1 Esd. 'and' or 'in addition to' (see R. Vm.).

Sherebiah and **Hashabiah** were Levites not priests.

25. See on vii. 15 f. and 19.

weighed: gold and silver coins are even now valued in banks, &c., by weight ; but in ancient times coins were not used, and the precious metals were weighed. *Shekel* means literally what is weighed out.

the offering: lit. 'what is lifted up,' so 'a present,' a word much used in the P code, but hardly if at all before D. It denotes in a general way a sacred gift, an offering to God, &c. See Deut. xii. 6, 11 ; Ezek. xliv. 30, &c.

there present: Heb. 'that could be found,' i. e. that happened to be present ; see on Esther i. 5.

26. six hundred and fifty talents of silver: i. e. nearly a quarter of a million pounds sterling (see on vii. 22). A silver talent had the value of about £360.

27 gold an hundred talents; and twenty bowls of gold, of a
thousand darics; and two vessels of fine bright brass,
28 precious as gold. And I said unto them, Ye are holy
unto the LORD, and the vessels are holy; and the silver
and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD, the
29 God of your fathers. Watch ye, and keep them, until ye
weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the
Levites, and the princes of the fathers' *houses* of Israel,
at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

(and silver vessels) **an hundred talents**: the value of the silver would be approximately £360,000.

of gold an hundred talents: a gold talent had the value of something over £6,000. The sense intended here is, however, probably the value of 100 talents of silver (see above) in nuggets of gold; so Meyer (see *op. cit.*, p. 69). The values given seem to us very high, but they are not at all improbable, according to Meyer, who is not a theologian but perhaps the greatest living historian of Persia: see on vii. 22.

27. bowls of gold: see on i. 10.

darics: see on ii. 69.

28. The bearers are holy, and what they bear with them is holy too.

the God of your fathers: see on vii. 28.

29. chiefs of the priests and the Levites: see on ver. 24.

princes, &c.: read with ‖ 1 Esd., Guthe, Bertholet: 'the heads of the fathers' *houses*': see on i. 5 and cf. iii. 12; 1 Chron. xxix. 6. The same Hebrew word is rendered in the R.V. **chiefs** and **princes**. The priests and Levites in charge of the gifts on the journey (ver. 24) were, on reaching Jerusalem, to hand them over to the representatives of the priests, Levites, and laity already in that city. We have perhaps to conceive of a college or governing body appointed by each of the classes mentioned.

chambers: it is better to keep this term for the Hebrew word (*ṣela'*) which stands for the rooms built immediately in contact with the Temple (see 1 Kings vi. 5; 1 Chron. xxxviii. 12), and to employ the word 'cell' for the Hebrew word (*liskhah*) in the present verse (so *DB.* iv. 699^{b}, art. 'Temple'). There were thirty of these 'cells' around the outer walls of the outer court of Ezekiel's temple: see Ezek. xl. 17-47, xlii. 1 ff.; and cf. Ezra x. 6; Neh. x. 37, xiii. 4-7 and 1 Chron. ix. 26. They were used as store-rooms for Temple vessels, provisions, &c., but priests resided in some of them: see x. 6; Ezek. xl. 46, &c.

So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the 30
silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to
Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the 31
twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and
the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us
from the hand of the enemy and the lier in wait by the
way. And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three 32
days. And on the fourth day was the silver and the 33
gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God
[a] into the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest;
and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with
them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the
son of Binnui, the Levites; the whole by number and 34
by weight: and all the weight was written at that time.

[a] Or, *by*

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30. priests . . . Levites: see on ver. 24.

31–34. *The departure; arrival at Jerusalem; delivery of the gifts.*

31. first month: i. e. Nisan, about our April.

hand, &c.: see on vii. 6.

enemy: see on ver. 22, and cf. next clause.

32. we came: for the direction of the journey see on vii. 9.

three days: Nehemiah and his party also rested for three days after reaching Jerusalem: see Neh. ii. 11.

33. the house, &c.: i. e. into the cells or store-rooms: see on ver. 29.

Meremoth: see Neh. iii. 4, 21. There was some doubt as to the priestly origin of the family (*koz*) when Zerubbabel and his party reached Jerusalem: see Neh. vii. 63; but see 1 Chron. xxix. 20.

Eleazar: see on viii. 2.

Jozabad: mentioned in x. 23 and in Neh. vii. 7 (see on) as a Levite.

Noadiah: not mentioned elsewhere, but his father or ancestor **Binnui** is named in Neh. x. 10 and xii. 8 as a Levite.

It will be seen that, as the gifts and offerings were in charge of twelve priests and twelve Levites during the journey (see on ver. 24), so they are received at the Temple by two priests and two Levites.

34. by number: i. e. the vessels.

by weight: i. e. the gold and silver.

at that time: to be joined with the next verse, as by

35 The children of the captivity, which were come out of exile, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he-goats for a sin offer-
36 ing: all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD. And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's satraps, and to the governors beyond the river: and they furthered the people and the house of God.

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the LXX (not *Luc.*, nor 1 Esd.). There were no punctuation marks in Hebrew when Ezra-Nehemiah was written, though the recently discovered Aramaic Papyri show that words were usually separated.

35. Sacrifice of thanksgiving.

children of the captivity: Ezra and his party just returned from exile: see on ii. 1 and iv. 1.

offered, &c.: see vi. 17, where we read of the very similar sacrifices offered by Zerubbabel and his party when the Temple was dedicated.

bullocks . . . rams . . . lambs: see on vi. 17. The number of these offered was larger on the occasion implied in vi. 17.

twelve he-goats: see on vi. 17.

sin offering: see on vi. 17.

all this was a burnt offering: i. e. was wholly consumed.

36. the king's commissions: see especially vii. 21 f., 24.

satraps: the word in the M.T. (from which through the Greek our word is derived) is Persian, and occurs nowhere else in Ezra-Nehemiah, but it is found thrice in Esther and eight times in Daniel. There was but one satrap in Transpotamia (see on iv. 10), but the heads of contiguous satrapies (Egypt, &c.) would need to be informed of the king's instructions. Darius divided his dominions into twenty provinces or satrapies: see on Esther i. 1.

governors: sub-satraps, rulers of parts of the Transpotamian satrapy, Samaria, Judah, &c. But the same Heb. and Aram. word (*pekhah*, cf. Persian *pasha*) has the meaning 'satrap' in v. 6, vi. 6, Neh. iii. 7.

satraps and **governors** occur together, and therefore with a different meaning, besides here in Dan. iii. 2; Esther iii. 12, viii. 9, ix. 3. The word for 'governor' has its narrow sense in Hag. i. 1, 10, ii. 1, 21 (Zerubbabel, the sub-satrap or governor of Judah).

Meyer[1] says that the Assyrian *pakhat*, Hebrew and Aramaic *pekhah*, was in the Persian period the usual term (so Greek ἔπαρχος) representing the Persian for 'satrap,' the latter occurring

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[1] *Entstehung*, 31 f. (n.).

only in O.T. writings of the Seleucid period (Daniel, Esther). But what of the present passage? He is hardly right in his statement that *pekhah* has this wider meaning (as satrap) throughout Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, and Mal. i. 8. As a matter of fact, it never has this sense in Haggai or Malachi, and but occasionally in Ezra-Nehemiah: see on Neh. ii. 9.

IX f. (1 Esd. viii. 68–ix. 36).

Ezra's Grief at hearing of the Mixed Marriages and the Measures he took to put an End to them.

According to Torrey[1] and Kent[2] (who slavishly follows him at almost every point) Neh. vii. 70–73[a] joins immediately on to Ezra viii. It is, however, quite clear that these verses were copied in connexion with the preceding list from the document which has its primary place in ch. ii (see introductory remarks to that chapter): so Schrader, R. Smend, Ryssel, Kuenen, Stade, Cornill, Driver, König, Kosters, Ryle, Baudissin, Bertholet, Siegfried, &c.

Torrey and Kent make Neh. vii. 73[b]–x (with some excepted parts) follow Neh. vii. 73[a]. The sequence of events would in that case be as follows:—

1. The arrival at Jerusalem; Ezra and the incidents which immediately followed, Ezra vii. 32–36 + Neh. vii. 70–73[a].
2. The public reading of the law, Neh. vii. 73[b]–viii. 1–12.
3. Observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, Neh. viii. 13–18.
4. Ezra's crusade against mixed marriages, Ezra ix.–x + 1 Esd. viii. 68–ix. 36.

1 Esd. and Josephus (who, however, generally follows the former) place No. 4 second in the above sequence of events, the order then being (using the above numbers) 1, 4, 2, 3.

Torrey says that on arriving at Jerusalem the first thing which Ezra was likely to do was to read the law. He was an expert in the law of Moses (Ezra vii. 6), and had brought it with him (ver. 14) that he might teach and apply it (verses 25 f.).

According to the M. T., 1 Esd. and Josephus, Ezra's first experience on reaching Jerusalem (after what is related in Ezra viii. 31–36) was to be informed of the mixed marriages, whereupon he deals with the same. Then, according to 1 Esd. and Josephus, the law was read. That is, 1 Esd. and Josephus place Neh. vii. 73[a]–x immediately after Ezra x, not as Torrey after Ezra vii. It is assumed here that Neh. vii. 73[b]–x is in its wrong place, for it is Ezra's history that it gives, and it belongs therefore to Ezra (see on Neh. vii. 73[b], &c.).

What is most likely to have happened immediately after Ezra had fairly settled down in Jerusalem? Torrey says that Ezra would read and explain the law which he had brought with him.

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[1] *Composition*, &c., 29 ff.

[2] *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, 369 ff.

9 Now when these things were done, the princes drew

It seems to the present writer much more probable that on discovering how his fellow countrymen had intermarried with the heathen, he would at once seek to remove this evil, for it ate at the very root of Judaism as then conceived. What is the use of a Jewish law unless you have a pure Jewish people? Ezra could not but have perceived the evil immediately after he had begun to look around, even if the princes (or nobles? see on Ezra ix. 1) had not informed him. It is hard to conceive of the events of Neh. vii. 73^{b}–viii. 18 happening without the most distant reference to what caused Ezra the greatest surprise and the profoundest grief.

On the contrary, having discovered the extent to which his people had departed from the faith and practice of their fathers, and having induced them to live a separate life and thus to constitute a Jewish community, a church nation, the next natural step would be to read to this regenerate society the laws which belonged to them, and which were intended for their guidance. He must have a Jewish people before he will teach the law which was held to belong pre-eminently to that people. In addition to any force that may lie in the above *a priori* reasoning as to what was likely to take place we have the testimony of 1 Esd. and Josephus as to what actually occurred. See further on Neh. vii. 73^{b}, &c.

1–5. *Ezra's astonishment and grief at hearing of the mixed marriages.*

1. when these things were done: lit. 'had been finished,' 'brought to an end.' The same phrase almost verbatim occurs in 1 Chron. xxxi. 1, and the verb in a similar form in 2 Chron. xx. 23, xxiv. 14, due to the fact that the Chronicler copied the older narrative in the present connexion.

By 'these things' we are to understand the events recorded in ch. viii. We have obviously to think of a period immediately following Ezra's arrival to account for his surprise on hearing of the mixed marriages. We have other indications of time in vii. 8, viii. 33, and x. 8 f. Inasmuch as Ezra arrived and the sacred gifts were handed over to the priests and Levites in the fifth month (vii. 8), and the general assembly to deal with the mixed marriages met in the ninth month (x. 8 f.), we have in the present verse to think of a time somewhere between the fifth and ninth month of the year 458 B. C.

princes: Hebrew *sarim*, the national leaders in civil and military matters, not necessarily members of the royal family; cf. the strict sense of the English word. In the post-exilic Jewish community the Hebrew word came probably to denote the heads of the Jerusalem clans, priestly, Levitical, and lay. See G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 382 ff., where the now common view is defended that *sarim* = government officials.

near unto me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, *doing* according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken 2
of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the

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The people of Israel, &c.: render, 'The people (including) Israel (=the common people), the priests and the Levites,' &c. The translation 'people of Israel' is allowed by the Hebrew according to a rather rare construction ('nom. apposition'), but in any case three classes are mentioned. See on x. 25.

the peoples of the lands: see on iii. 3. The races mentioned must not be literally understood. They are given merely as samples of what is meant. There could be no Hittites now in Palestine, and hardly Perizzites or Jebusites: on the last see p. 233.

Here it is implied that marriage with any non-Jewish people was forbidden. The older law prohibited marriage with Canaanites, Ammonites, and Moabites (see Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3, xxiii. 3; cf. Neh. xiii. 1), but allowed marriage with Edomites and Egyptians (Deut. xxiii. 2). The law in Deut. xxi. 10 f. permitted marriage with non-Jews who were not Canaanites: see on vi. 21. Ezra must have felt that the continued existence of Judaism rendered it necessary to put an end to the intermarriage of Jews with others: cf. Ezek. xliv.

doing . . . abominations: render, 'as regards their abominations.' This last word denotes here not idolatrous practices as usually (Deut. xviii. 9; 1 Kings xiv. 24, &c.), but the mixed marriages.

even of: better, 'viz.' In Hebrew a preposition (*l*) is used which commonly introduces an enumeration of details.

Canaanites: dwellers in the lowlands west of the central mountain range of Palestine, though the word cannot be proved from either Heb. or Aram. etymology to mean 'lowlander.' In J and corresponding parts of the O. T., as in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, Canaanites are the original inhabitants of West Palestine (see Amos ii. 9), a sense in which in E and D (Deut. i. 27, &c.), as generally in Babylonian, the word 'Amorites' is used.

the Amorites: read (with 1 Esd. viii. 66) 'the Edomites.'

2. have taken: as wives. So x. 44: 2 Chron. xi. 21, xiii. 21.

holy seed: i. e. the people (so often in Heb.) separated, in theory, to God: see Isa. vi. 13; and cf. Exod. xix. 5 f.; 1 Pet. ii. 5.

peoples of the lands: yea, the hand of the princes and
3 [a] rulers hath been [b] chief in this trespass. And when I
heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and
plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and
4 sat down astonied. Then were assembled unto me every
one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, be-
cause of the trespass of them of the captivity; and I sat

[a] Or, *deputies* [b] Or, *first*

mingled themselves: by marriage. The same verb in the same sense occurs in Ps. cvi. 34 f.

peoples of the lands: see on iii. 8.

princes: see on ver. 1.

rulers: the Hebrew word here is probably a marginal gloss: only one word occurs in the LXX, though in 1 Esd. viii. 70 ('rulers and great men') and in the Syr. ('elders and Levites') there are two, as in the M. T. The Hebrew word here is a transliterated form of the Assyrian *Shaknu* (a general, a governor of a province) and is in Ezra-Nehemiah almost certainly a synonym for the word translated 'princes': so Meyer, *Entstehung*, 132 ff., Bertholet, Benzinger, *Bib. Arch.*(2), 263.

3. I rent my (inner) **garment and my** (outer) **mantle**: for similar manifestations of grief and indignation see Gen. xxxvii. 29, 34; Lev. x. 6; Joshua vii; Judges xi. 35; Job i. 20, &c.; and Esther iv. 1.

and plucked off (Heb. some of) **the hair of my head**: baldness is a sign of deep sorrow in Job i. 20; Ezek. vii. 18; Amos viii. 10, but in these cases the hair is apparently shaved off (see especially Job i. 20). See Homer's *Odyssey*, x end: 'They sat . . . lamented and plucked each his hair.' Plucking off the hair of another is a sign of indignation (Neh. xiii. 25) or of cruelty (Isa. l. 6).

my beard: plucking the beard as a sign of grief, nowhere else mentioned in the O. T.

astonied: Old English for 'astonished' in the sense of being 'bewildered,' 'dumbfounded,' which is a common meaning of the Hebrew word in either the transitive (Dan. xi. 31) or intransitive (Job xxi. 5; Ezek. iii. 15) sense.

4. every one that trembled, &c.: see x. 3; Isa. lxvi. 2.

at the words, &c.: i. e. at the consequences of infringing enactments on the Divine law forbidding the sin in question.

because of the trespass of them of the captivity: these words carry with them the implication that, contrary to Kosters' view, there was a return before that of Ezra: see Introd. p. 23 ff., and for **trespass** see on x. 2.

astonied until the evening oblation. And at the even- 5
ing oblation I arose up from my [a] humiliation, even with
my garment and my mantle rent; and I fell upon my
knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God;

[a] Or, *fasting*

astonied: see on v. 3.

until the evening oblation: i.e. until the evening. Similarly in 1 Kings xviii. 29 and Judges ix. 1. See on iii. 5. In 2 Kings xvi. 15 we read of the morning burnt offering (flesh) and of the evening meal (vegetable) offering. The latter is the word employed here, and, denoting primarily a gift, is used for a sacrifice of any kind. It came to denote specially the meal or vegetable offerings which in post-exilic times (P) accompanied the burnt offering (see Exod. xxix. 42; Num. xxviii. 3-8).

In late pre-exilic times the *minkhah* or meal offering was presented in the evening (see 2 Kings xvi. 15; cf. 1 Kings xviii. 29, 36). This custom seems to be implied in Neh. x. 33 (34), see on. The exact time of this sacrifice was perhaps that called in later literature 'between the two evenings,' i.e. (probably) between the beginning of sunset and dark (see Exod. xii. 6 and Num. xxviii. 4). According to Ezekiel's programme (Ezek. xlvi. 13-15) the burnt and meal offerings were to be assigned to the morning alone. The later custom presented a burnt offering, as also a meal and a drink offering (as the accompaniment of the first), both morning and evening: see Exod. xxix. 38-42 and Num. xxviii. 3-8 (both late P).

5-15. *Ezra's confession* (‖1 Esd. viii. 70 (72)-87 (89)). Note the strong Deuteronomic and Jeremianic colouring of this prayer and of that in Neh. ix. 6-38, and observe how Ezra identifies himself with the nation in its guilt, according to the ancient principle of the oneness or solidarity of society (see Psalms, vol. ii, in this series, pp. 21, 195, and 218). The prayer in Dan. ix. 4-19 has this same feature.

5. the evening oblation: see on v. 4.

humiliation: so (rightly) the LXX (including *Luc.*). The Heb. noun occurs here only in the O. T., though the cognate verb (='to be humbled,' 'afflicted') is of frequent occurrence. In post-biblical Hebrew it denotes 'fasting,' and in ‖1 Esd. and R. V. it is (wrongly) so translated.

with my garment . . . rent: not a second time: see ver. 3.

I fell upon my knees: see 1 Kings viii. 54 and Dan. vi. 10. But prayer was offered standing also: see 1 Sam. i. 9; 1 Kings viii. 22; Matt. v. 5.

spread out my hands unto the LORD my God: see Exod.

6 and I said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift
up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are in-
creased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up
7 unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers we have
been [a] exceeding guilty unto this day; and for our iniqui-
ties have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered
into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to
captivity, and to spoiling, and to confusion of face, as it
8 is this day. And now for a little moment grace hath

[a] Heb. *in great guiltiness.*

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ix. 27, xvii. 11; 1 Kings viii. 22; 2 Chron. vi. 12 f.; Isa. i. 15; 2 Macc. iii. 20. In early times the custom was in prayer to spread the hands towards the altar, the supposed abode of deity. See many representations of such on Egyptian monuments. In later times the face was turned during prayer towards Jerusalem (see 2 Chron. vi. 34; Dan. vi. 11), as among the Jews still, and as Moslems pray looking towards Mecca. Perhaps, however, the raising of the hands and eyes (Ps. cxxiii. 1, see on in *Century Bible*) in prayer is a survival of astral religion. Some anthropologists hold that when in prayer the hands were first raised it was in deprecation, the open parts of the hands being turned towards the deity.

6. See Jer. vi. 15, viii. 12.

I am ashamed and blush: the same two verbs in Jer. xxxi. 19 and viii. 12, and in another form (*Hiphil*) in Jer. vi. 15. The second verb, from a root = 'to strike,' has reference to the pain accompanying the feeling of shame, and might be rendered 'distressed.'

for our iniquities are increased over our head, so that they are like to overwhelm us. See Ps. xxxviii. 4.

our guiltiness (= liability to punishment) **. . . unto the heavens:** the same figure 2 Chron. xxviii. 9.

7. See Neh. ix. 32 and cf. Dan. ix. 7.

kings of the lands: i. e. of heathen lands, but the reference is in particular to the kings of Assyria and Babylon: see Neh. ix. 32.

confusion: lit. 'shame.'

as it is this day: it is for their iniquities that they are now subject to the king of Persia. Their sufferings are due to their sins.

8. And now: i. e. since Zerubbabel's return.

for a little moment: the space of eighty years since Cyrus issued his decree is small in comparison with the long periods of Israel's rebellion and punishment. For the expression see Isa. xxvi. 20.

grace: i. e. 'favour.' Except here and in Joshua xi. 20 the

been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a [a] nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we are bondmen; yet our 9

[a] See Is. xxii. 23.

Hebrew word has the sense of supplication. The verbal root denotes, however, 'to show pity,' or 'favour.'

to leave us a remnant to escape: better, 'leaving us a remnant of escaped ones,' the last two words representing a Hebrew word ('that which has escaped') used in Exod. x. 5 and Joel ii. 3 of the land which escaped the ravages of the locusts. This Hebrew word is a great one in Isaiah for that part of Israel which survived the judgements of Yahweh: see Isa. iv. 2, x. 10, xxxvii. 31 f. Here it may have this general Isaianic sense, but it seems probable in the light of verses 13–15 and especially of Neh. i. 2. that the returned exiles are meant. In reckoning up the forces for righteousness, Ezra and Nehemiah take little account of the Jews who were not removed into exile.

to give us a nail: the language is based on Isaiah (xxii. 23), as is that of the preceding phrase, and must have here the same sense as in the original passage. A nail fastened into a wall to hold utensils is fixed and immovable. The 'remnant of escaped ones' is the nail now at length restored and established at Jerusalem (**his holy place**). The word translated **nail** means also tent-pin, and most expositors think the figure is that of a tent made and kept firm by the various pins driven into the ground (see Isa. liv. 2). But the reference is to Isa. xxii. 23, and we have 'nail' (or 'pin'), not 'nails' ('pins'). In ‖ 1 Esdras for 'nail' we find 'root and name.'

may lighten our eyes: i. e. may give us the joy which shows itself in bright shining eyes. The same figure in 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29; Ps. xiii. 4; Prov. xxix. 13. The corresponding phrase in 1 Esdras is 'to discover our light' (or 'lightbearer') 'in the house of the Lord our God,' which Guthe reads here also.

a little reviving (‖ 1 Esdras, 'food': so the Heb. word in Judges vi. 4, xvii. 10). The writer seems to have in mind Ezek. xxxvii. 1–14, where the restoration of the nation to Jerusalem is graphically set forth under the figure of the reviving of dead bones. The realization of this prediction has in some measure (cf. **little**) taken place.

in our bondage: see ver. 9.

9. bondmen: being subject to the Persian government. The repeated expressions referring to the subjection in verses 8 f. show how the thought rankled in their bosoms.

God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the [a] ruins thereof, and to give us a [b] wall in Judah
10 and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,
11 which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land through the uncleanness of the peoples of

[a] Or, *waste places* [b] Or, *fence*

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hath extended mercy unto us: render, 'has shown us favour.'

the kings of Persia: i. e. Cyrus, Darius I, and Artaxerxes I.

to give . . . to set up . . . and to repair, &c.: render 'giving . . . setting up . . . and repairing,' &c. We have here an enumeration of three ways in which God displayed His favour to the nation: (1) He restored them, or at least some of them: see on ver. 8 (**a little reviving**). (2) He enabled them to rebuild the Temple structure (see iii–vi), even to restore the parts which had been pulled down or injured. (3) He defended them from their enemies round about.

a wall: to be understood figuratively as in R.V. 'a fence,' 'giving us protection against our foes in the city and its outskirts,' setting as it were a hedge about them, such as surrounds a vineyard (see Isa. v. 5 and Ps. lxxx. 12, where the same word is used). The walls of Jerusalem cannot be meant, as they were not yet built (see Neh. ii. 11–17); and besides, such walls could not surround 'Jerusalem and Judah.' Kosters' argument from this verse that this chapter has its right place after Nehemiah falls thus to the ground. Oettli explains: 'Has made us a separate, independent community.'

11. which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets: no such words occur in the prophetical or any other parts of the O.T. Ezra seems to be giving the gist of what the law taught: see Lev. xviii. 24 f., 27. We should, however, have expected 'Moses' and not **the prophets** to have been mentioned, in harmony with the custom in Ezra and Nehemiah when the laws of the Pentateuch are referred to.

unclean land: the exact expression occurs nowhere else in the O.T. In Lev. xviii. 25 the Hebrew words so translated mean lit. 'a land made' (or 'that has become')' unclean.' See 2 Chron. xxix. 5, and in contrast Isa. xxxvi. 17.

the lands, through their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their filthiness. Now 12 therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their prosperity for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. And after all that is come 13 upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great guilt, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniqui-

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12. give not your daughters, &c.: so substantially Deut. vii. 3.

nor seek, &c.: so Deut. xxiii. 6.

peace: the Hebrew word embraces in its meaning whatever is essential to perfect well-being: see on v. 7 and on Ps. cxix. 165 (*Century Bible*).

that ye may be strong: see Deut. xi. 8.

and eat the good of the land: see Isa. i. 19 and Gen. xlv. 18.

13–15. Is it possible that, notwithstanding the lesson of our punishment, our nation is, contrary to thy command, once more guilty of intermarrying with foreigners? Wilt thou not put an end to us? But thou art faithful to thy word, and dost preserve a remnant though we are guilty.

13. One restraining thought alone is mentioned: the suffering of the nation on account of its sin. The words **seeing that,** &c., to the end of the verse are intended to show that the guilt, the deserving, was beyond the actual punishment.

God hast punished us less, &c.: this is the correct sense of the original, which might be more literally rendered: 'Thou hast relented' (the same verb in Isa. xiv. 6) or, 'Thou hast restrained thy anger' (the word 'anger' is to be supplied with the verbs *shamar* and *naṭar* 'to keep') 'according to a scale of sins fewer than ours': i.e. 'Thou hast treated us better than our sins called for.'

Other renderings of the verse are: (1) 'Thou hast held back some of our sins,' i.e. prevented them from overwhelming us, a reference to ver. 6 ('our iniquities are increased over our heads'). So Siegfried, &c. (2) 'Thou hast judged us' (altering one Hebrew letter for another like it) 'more favourably than our sins deserved': so Syr., Bertholet, Buhl. (3) 'Thou hast lightened our sins,' i.e. lightened or lessened the punishment of them: so the LXX and 1 Esdras.

14 ties deserve, and hast given us such a remnant, shall we
again break thy commandments, and join in affinity
with the peoples that do these abominations? wouldest
not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so
15 that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? O
LORD, the God of Israel, thou art righteous; for we are
left a remnant that is escaped, as it is this day: behold,
we are before thee in our guiltiness; for none can stand
before thee because of this.

10 [C_E] Now while Ezra prayed, and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God,

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14. shall we again break, &c.: better, 'do we again,' &c. They were actually guilty of this sin: see ver. 15. The form of the Hebrew verb (imperfect) can be translated by the present or by the future.

again: referring to the fact implied in Deut. vii. 1–7, that the Israelites had been guilty of intermarrying with the natives on reaching Canaan from Egypt.

join in affinity: lit. 'become sons in law.'

the peoples that do (lit. 'of') **these abominations**: LXX and 1 Esdras: 'the people of these lands' (or 'religions'), implying a rather similarly written Hebrew word which may be the original one: see on iii. 3.

abominations: see on ver. 1.

remnant: lit. 'what is left over' (after a sifting process by punishment).

any to escape: one word in Hebrew—that translated **remnant** in ver. 13.

15. righteous: i. e. 'faithful' according to the late meaning found in Isa. xl. ff. So 1 Esdras, 'thou art true' (ἀληθινός). It was God's faithfulness in keeping the word of His promise that secured the preservation of a remnant: see Isa. x. 20 ff., xi. 11 ff., &c., and Neh. ix. 33.

guiltiness: the Hebrew and English words denote 'liability to punishment.'

for none, &c.: render, 'for it is impossible on account of this thing to stand before thee.'

stand: see Ezek. xxii. 14; Ps. lxxvi. 7, lxxx. 3; Dan. x. 17.

(because of) **this**: Heb. neut. 'this thing': i. e. the sin in question.

X (‖ 1 Esd. viii–ix. 36).

REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE ON ACCOUNT OF THE MIXED MARRIAGES AND THE STEPS THEY TOOK TO PUT AN END TO THE EVIL.

In the preceding chapter Ezra is the speaker, and the first person (I, &c.) is accordingly used. In the present chapter, on the contrary, he is spoken of in the third person (he, &c.). The difference is generally accounted for by supposing that in chap. x Ezra's own words have been worked over and altered by an editor. See p. 16 ff.

1–8. The people take an oath to put away their non-Jewish wives (and the children they had borne them?).

To most readers it will appear cruelly immoral and irreligious to require the abandonment of wives that were not of Jewish descent and of the children begotten by them: see, however, on ver. 44, which favours the idea that in most cases the children were not put away. How different Paul's teaching respecting mixed marriages (1 Cor. vii. 10 ff.)! But one has to bear in mind the peculiar circumstances and the dominating ideas of the day. The ancients did not attach to marriage the sanctity and binding force with which Christian nations have invested it, so that the separation of married persons was much easier and more frequent (see Matt. v. 32, xix. 9).

Purity of racial blood was always, and especially at the time in question, a matter of supreme moment. The nation was believed, as such, to have been selected to be the world's teacher. For this it was to keep itself apart from other nations. The idea of national and ceremonial purity was now particularly deep in the national consciousness, owing in large part to the teaching of the Deuteronomist and Ezekiel. To the priests of these times there was no middle way between purity and impurity: compromise was impossible. It must, however, be remembered that there was an anti-puritan as well as a puritan party, and of this the Book of Ruth is one exponent. See Bertholet, *Die Stellung*, &c.

1–5. *The people confess their guilt, and undertake to put away the strange wives.*

1. made confession: the Hebrew verb so translated means to give thanks, praise, and (as here and in Neh. i. 6 and ix. 2 f.) to make acknowledgement of sin. Ezra made confession on behalf of the people's sin, because, being one of them, he shared their guilt according to the old idea of national solidarity: see p. 137, and on Ps. cvi. 6 (*Century Bible*).

casting himself down, &c.: stretching hands towards the Temple, the supposed abode of Deity: see 1 Kings viii. 29 f., 35 and Dan. vi. 10 and on Ps. cxxi. 1 (*Century Bible*). This would be in the priests' court, on the eastern side of the house, perhaps in

there was gathered together unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for
2 the people wept very sore. And Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have married strange women of the peoples of the land: yet
3 now there is hope for Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put

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front of the altar of burnt offerings. The people assembled in the great court could see and hear him.

Israel: the whole community, not as in ix. 1 (see on), and often in Ezra-Nehemiah the lay portion.

congregation: see on ii. 64. The Hebrew denotes in particular a gathering for worship.

men, women, and children: see Deut. xxix. 11, xxxi. 12; 2 Chron. xx. 13; Neh. viii. 3, x. 28.

women: i. e. the Jewish wives whose sympathies would be sure to side with Ezra's crusade.

children: not the word used for infants (*ṭaph*, see Esther iii. 13 and viii. 11). The noun used in 1 Esdras (*neanias*) is applied to Saul in Acts vii. 58. Josephus uses it of Agrippa I at the age of forty.

2. Shecaniah: see viii. 3 and cf. ver. 26. Did he take action against his own father?

sons of Elam: see ii. 7, viii. 7.

trespassed: the Hebrew verb (*ma'al*) is used of violating an express command: see verses 6, 10; Neh. i. 8, xiii. 27. The cognate noun occurs in ix. 2, 4, which see for what is here meant: see on ver. 13 (**transgressed**).

married: lit. 'to give a home to,' an idiom = 'to marry,' found only in Ezra-Nehemiah, perhaps with the implication that the union in question was not true marriage: see the next note.

strange (women): this adjective is used in Proverbs (ii. 16, vii. 5, &c.) to describe a harlot; the women whom they had living with them were harlots, not wives: see last note (peoples of the) **land**: see on iii. 3.

3. covenant: the only occurrence of the word in Ezra. Here it denotes a vow or solemn undertaking made to God, as in 2 Chron. xxix. 6.

Usually God is said to make a covenant with men, as in Ezek. xxiv. 35.

put away: lit. 'to put out,' as in ver. 19, i. e. to remove from the houses the 'strange women' whom they had introduced: see on ver. 2 (**marry**). The ordinary word for putting away a wife

away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of [a] my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise; for the matter belongeth 4
unto thee, and we are with thee: be of good courage, and do it. Then arose Ezra, and made the chiefs of the 5
priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they would do according to this word. So they sware. Then 6

[a] Or, *the Lord*

occurs in Deut. xxii. 19, &c.; cf. Gen. xxi. 10 for another such verb. The union, not being a true marriage, could be brought to an end by merely turning the woman out: no divorce proceedings were necessary.

all the wives: read (with *Luc.* and virtually 1 Esdras) 'all our foreign wives.'

according to the counsel of my lord (= Ezra): Ezra seems to have been entrusted by the Persian king with supreme authority in Jewish matters. See vii. 5.

those that tremble, &c.: see on ix. 4. In 1 Esdras 'Those who obey the law of the Lord,' which Guthe thinks represents the original Hebrew text.

let it be done, &c.: render according to the M. T. (so *Luc.*), 'it shall (or will) be done,' a mere statement of fact.

4. Arise: the Heb. verb denotes here, as very often, 'rouse yourself,' 'be energetic.' Before another verb it denotes to set about, begin the action of the verb. See Joshua i. 2; Judges iv. 14; 1 Chron. xxii. 6.

1 Esdras has 'Arise and put into execution,' which may well be a mere interpretation, or perhaps a second verb has fallen out from the Hebrew.

belongeth, &c.: Heb. 'rests upon thee as an obligation.'

be of good courage, &c.: lit. 'be strong,' &c. So 1 Chron. xxii. 16; cf. Joshua i. 6.

5. arose: see on ver. 4 (**arise**).

chiefs: the word belongs to each of the three classes enumerated (priests, Levites, and the laity): see on ix. 1.

the priests, the Levites: the regular Deuteronomic phrase (all Levites were priests, see Deut. xvii. 9-18, xviii. 1, xxi. 5, &c.), indicating, if genuine, early authorship. But we should probably read with *Luc.*, LXX, and 1 Esdras 'the priests and the Levites,' the later (P) phraseology.

Israel: here the laity: see on ver. 1 and ix. 1.

6. *Ezra's grief.*

Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib: [a] and *when* he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the trespass of them
7 of the captivity. And they made proclamation through-

[a] According to some ancient versions, *and he lodged there.*

Then Ezra rose, &c.: render, 'And when Ezra had risen from before the house of God he went into the chamber of Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib, and passed the night there, eating no bread and drinking no water,' &c.

chamber (Heb. *lishkah*): better 'cell,' see on viii. 29.

Jehohanan the son of Eliashib: since Eliashib was high-priest during the whole or greater part of the activity of Nehemiah (see Neh. iii. 1, 20, xiii. 4, 28) this Jehohanan cannot be identical with Johanan, the father and predecessor of Jaddua (see Neh. xii. 22, cf. ver. 11), the high-priest who, according to Josephus [1], went to meet Alexander the Great as the latter was advancing towards Jerusalem. Assuming that Jaddua was high-priest in 333 B. C. his father could not have held the office at the time with which we are dealing (*circa* 440 B. C.). Now in the Sachau Aramaic Papyri, No. 1, line 18, mention is made of a Jehohanan, high-priest at Jerusalem at the time this letter was sent to Bagoas, governor of Judah, viz. 407 B. C. Eliashib must have had a son with this name, and as he was himself high-priest about 440 B. C. this son might well have been high-priest in 407 B. C. In favour of this is the identity of the names—Jehohanan in both cases, while in Neh. xii. 22 it is Johanan. Both are Hebrew forms of our 'John.'

It is quite evident, as Nöldeke and others have pointed out, that the list of high-priests in Neh. xii is defective, see notes on the chapter. There is no need therefore to interpret the words 'the chamber of Jehohanan, son of Eliashib,' proleptically as meaning 'the chamber subsequently known as that of Jehohanan,' &c.

and when he came thither (Heb. 'there'): read (with 1 Esdras), 'and passed the night there,' changing one Hebrew consonant (*k*) to one much like it (*n*). In the M. T. two identical verbal forms occur in the same verse, which is suspicious.

he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for fasting as an expression of mourning see on viii. 21.

trespass: see on ver. 2, and for the whole clause on ix. 4.

7 f. *An assembly summoned.*

7. made proclamation: see on i. 1, and cf. Neh. viii. 15. See also on viii. 21, where a different verb is employed.

[1] *Antiq.* x. 8, 5.

out Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; and that whosoever came not within 8
three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be [a] forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of the captivity. Then 9
all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within the three days; it was the

[a] Heb. *devoted.*

Judah and Jerusalem: see on ii. 1.

8. within three days: since in so short a time the proclamation could be made and responded to, the area within which the community resided must have been very restricted. See plan opposite p. 159.

princes: see on ix. 1.

elders: in Ezra an Aramaic (v. 5, &c.) and (as here) a Heb. word are so rendered. Every city (but see below) had its elders (see ver. 14), who were heads of houses, and controlled local affairs as British town or city councillors. Princes were the heads of the three classes of Jewish society, see on ix. 1. It is strange, but significant, that we do not read of elders at Jerusalem: probably the princes, residing for the most part at Jerusalem, acted as the local as well as the general authority. We do not meet with the words prince or elder in Nehemiah, though corresponding words are made use of. See on Neh. ii. 16, and cf. G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, ii. 377.

all his substance: in earlier times idolatrous cities were to be devoted (Heb. *kherem*, Gk. *anathema*, see Gal. i. 8 f.), i. e. offered up, to God as a burnt offering: see Joshua vi. 17 f., vii. 1, 11, 15, &c. (JE). In the later laws individual Israelites took the place of Canaanite, &c., cities, and were put to death for idolatry (Deut. vii. 26; Lev. xxvii. 29 (P)), or excluded from the community (John ix. 22, xii. 44, xiv. 2; cf. Luke vi. 22), their property being seized (made *kherem*, a devoted thing) and added to the wealth of the Temple (see Lev. xxvii, 28 f.). The fact that Ezra had the power to make and enforce such laws shows he had been entrusted by the Persians with supreme authority in Jewish matters (see vii. 25 f.). Among the Israelites property once possessed would not be permanently alienated except in very extreme cases like the above.

9–17. *Meeting of the assembly; decision to appoint a commission of investigation.*

9. Judah and Benjamin: see on i. 5.

ninth month: i. e. Kislew (see Zech. vii. 1 and on Neh. i. 1),

ninth month, on the twentieth *day* of the month: and all the people sat in the broad place before the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for [a] the great
10 rain. And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have trespassed, and have married strange
11 women, to increase the guilt of Israel. Now therefore [b] make confession unto the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves

[a] Heb. *the rains.* [b] Or, *give thanks*

corresponding roughly to portions of Nov.-Dec., the time of the early rain. The 20th Kislew would be nearly five months after Ezra's first arrival (see vii. 9). Perhaps this time was required to make arrangements for the meeting of the commission: not at all unlikely there was opposition, internal (see ver. 15) or external. The time of the year was unfavourable for such gatherings, but Ezra's zeal could brook no delay.

the broad place: see on Neh. iii. 26 (**water gate**). The Hebrew word has a sense similar to our 'square' or 'place,' and stands commonly for the open space outside the gates of Eastern cities, used as a market-place (see Deut. xiii. 16; 2 Sam. xxi. 12, and Esther iv. 6). This open space was situate on the inside of the Water Gate in the north-east of the temple area.

great rain: a correct rendering of the Heb. 'rains' ('plural of intensity'). The reference is to the early and heavy rains. During my visit to Palestine in 1888 they began on Nov. 4, the second day after my arrival at Jerusalem. In the course of the following two months there were often for days together heavier rains than I have seen elsewhere.

10. (Ezra) **the priest:** see on vii. 11.

stood up: see on ver. 4 (**arise**).

trespassed, married, strange women: see on ver. 2.

to increase: better 'increasing' (gerund). The Hebrew permits either rendering.

guilt: liability to punishment: see on ix. 4.

11. make confession: or 'give thanks,' 'render praise': see pp. 137, 143.

(do his) **pleasure:** objectively understood 'what He desires, is pleased with': see Ps. cxlv. 19 and cf. Neh. ix. 24 (end of verse), Dan. xi. 3, 16, 36.

separate yourselves: see on vi. 21. They were to isolate themselves from their heathen neighbours by avoiding unnecessary intercourse, observing the laws anent foods and drinks, &c.; and they were also to put away their heathen wives.

from the peoples of the land, and from the strange women. Then all the congregation answered and said 12
with a loud voice, [a] As thou hast said concerning us, so must we do. But the people are many, and it is a time of 13
much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we have greatly transgressed in this matter. Let now our princes [b] be ap- 14
pointed for all the congregation, and let all them that are in our cities which have married strange women come at

[a] Or, *As thou hast said, so it behoveth us to do* [b] Heb. *stand.*

peoples of the land: see on iii. 3.

12. congregation: see on ii. 64. Here the word includes the returned exiles only (see ver. 16).

As thou hast said, &c.: render as in the R.Vm., 'As thou hast said, so it behoveth us to do.' The E.VV. translate the same Hebrew word ('concerning *us*, so must *we* do') twice over. The misplacing of the Hebrew accent has led to this confusion.

13. Three hindrances to the expeditious settlement of the matter are urged.

1. The magnitude of the assembly: how could so many find lodgings and entertainment.

2. The weather was unpropitious. In December, 1888, I saw as much snow in and about Jerusalem, and found it as keenly cold, as during the severest winter in Great Britain. The early rains are generally accompanied by a sudden depression in the temperature.

3. The large number of mixed marriages to be dealt with.

transgressed: the root idea of the Hebrew verb (*pasha'*) is 'to rebel'; in late Hebrew, as here, it is specially used of violating a specific law: see Deut. viii. 23. See on ver. 2 (**trespassed**).

14. princes: see on ix. 1. They are here to act with the **elders** and **judges.**

for (all the congregation): 'on behalf of,' not 'instead of.'

cities: i. e. other than Jerusalem. Cases would be tried where the suspected parties resided (cf. our system of legal procedure and travelling judges). The princes resided at Jerusalem and would act in that city: see on ver. 8. The Hebrew word for **cities** (*'arim*) is used for villages, towns, and what we call cities (see the concordances), though in some passages it denotes the idea of a fortified place (2 Kings xvii. 9, xviii. 8, &c.), and even a fortress (see 2 Sam. v. 7, 9, vi. 10, &c.).

strange women: see on ver. 2.

appointed times, and with them the elders of every city,
and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God
15 be turned from us, [a] until this matter be despatched. Only
Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tik-
vah [b] stood up against this *matter*: and Meshullam and

[a] Or, *as touching this matter* [b] Or, *were appointed over this*

at appointed times: so Neh. x. 34, xiii. 31.

judges: in earlier parts of the O. T. the king is called by the Hebrew word Englished 'judge': see Deut. xvii. 9, 12; 2 Kings xvi. 5; Isa. xvi. 5. The *shophets* (E.VV. 'judges') of Israel prior to the establishment of the monarchy were deliverers, and in their several districts administrators, as, e. g. Gideon (Judges vi. 11 ff.), Jephthah (Judges x. 6 ff.), and Samson (Judges xiii. 1 ff.), though the last named belongs to a different category.

It is difficult to differentiate 'elders' and 'judges' in post-exilic biblical literature. It seems highly probable that the presiding elder in each city (see on **cities**) was recognized as *shophet* or judge. We find even the priests arrogating to themselves the functions and prerogatives of the judge (see Deut. xvii. 9, xix. 17, xxi. 5), just as in later times the high-priest became king (see vii. 5).

The leading officials in Tyre and Carthage were called *shophetim* ('judges' is a very misleading rendering). The two *sufetes* (= *shophetim*) in Carthage corresponded to the two consuls in Republican Rome.

until the fierce, &c.: render, 'so that the fierce wrath of our God may be turned,' &c. The Hebrew conjunction rendered **until** has this (*telic*) meaning also in Gen. xxvii. 44 and Mic. vii. 9.

until this matter, &c.: read (with 2 Heb. MSS., the Versions, and 1 Esdras) as in R. Vm., 'as touching this matter.'

15. The only prominent men to oppose the policy outlined in ver. 14 were Jonathan and Jahzeiah, aided by Meshullam and a Levite called Shabbethai. This is implied in the rendering of the R. V., which is the only possible one; but it has difficulties, and many scholars prefer, on account of them, to follow the A. V. and the R. Vm., which regard the four men named as helpers, not hinderers, of the proposal described in the foregoing verse. Here are some of the grounds for the latter view:—

1. The verb here rendered in the R. V., **stood up against**, is identical with that rendered in ver. 14, 'be appointed for.' In reply, let it be noted that the preposition following the verb is different in each case, and that there are many examples in Hebrew in which a verb has opposite meanings with different prepositions. Cf. the Hebrew verbs 'to be sorry,' &c., and 'to fight.'

As a matter of fact this verb (lit. 'to stand') means 'to stand

Shabbethai the Levite helped them. And the children 16
of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain heads of fathers' *houses*, after their fathers' houses, and all of them by their names, were separated ; and they sat

against' in Lev. xix. 16 ; 1 Chron. xxi. 1 ; 2 Chron. xxii. 23 ; Dan. viii. 25, xi. 15. Perhaps the writer intends a word-play in verses 14 f. ('stand for,' 'stand against').

2. The beginning of ver. 16 is said to imply that the returned exiles supported the suggestion of ver. 14. But if the text is not at fault (which is doubtful) we may understand the word 'so' in ver. 16 to refer to what is said in ver. 14, ver. 15 being treated as a parenthesis. We may then thus paraphrase ver. 16: 'But the returned exiles acted thus (see ver. 14) (though Jonathan, &c., stood up against it).'

3. We do not read elsewhere of any opposition. It should, however, be remembered that our narrative is but a brief and imperfect record of what took place, and, to say the least, opposition of the kind here advocated is exactly what one would have expected.

It may be added :—

1. The word rendered **only** has often the meaning of 'but,' 'however,' introducing an adversative sentence : see Gen. ix. 4, xx. 12, xxi. 21 ; Lev. xxi. 23, xxvii. 28 ; Num. xviii. 15, 17 ; 2 Sam. iii. 13 ; Jer. x. 24.

2. We know that it was Ezra who superintended the execution of the proposal of ver. 14, and not Jonathan, &c. It must, however, be allowed that the Versions, including 1 Esdras, favour the A. V. and R. Vm.

3. Van Hoonacker[1] thinks Jonathan (see viii. 6) and Jahzeiah (nowhere else mentioned) were priests and their two helpers Levites. This is, however, a case of being wise above what is written.

16. See on preceding verse.

children of the captivity : see on iv. 1 and also on ii. 1.

And Ezra, &c. : render, 'And Ezra chose (lit. 'separated') for himself a number (lit. 'men') of heads of fathers' houses according to their fathers' houses, all of them marked (ticked) off by name.'

heads of fathers' *houses* : see on ii. 59.

by their names : probably the phrase at the end of viii. 20 (see on) stood originally here as there, the participle 'marked' (R. V. 'expressed') having been overlooked by an early copyist.

were separated : read with 1 Esdras and some MSS. of the LXX, '(And Ezra) chose (lit. 'separated') for himself' : see above.

[1] *Néhémie et Esdras*, p. 38 (n.).

down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the
17 matter. And they made an end with all the men that had
married strange women by the first day of the first month.
18 And among the sons of the priests there were found that

tenth month: i. e. Tebet (Dec.-Jan.): see on ver. 9.

to examine, &c.: another instance of the tacit use by the English translators (E.VV.) of an amended text. The M. T. has (apparently) 'for Darius,' the consonants of which are almost exactly the same as 'to examine.'

17. The M. T. is incapable of yielding any passable sense. Bertheau and succeeding commentators are almost certainly right in regarding the words **the men that had married strange wives** as the heading which originally preceded the lists in verses 18-44. Ver. 17 will then contain excellent Hebrew, the translation of which is: 'And (the inquiry) was brought to an end in every place by the first day,' &c. If the M. T. is retained we must render: 'And (the inquiry) was brought to an end as regards all the men who had married strange women by the first day,' &c.

And they made an end: the construction is that of the indefinite subject and is better translated by the passive. It is the thing done that is emphasized, not the agent or agents.

married strange women: see on ver. 2.

first month: i. e. Nisan (March-April): the Jewish year began with Nisan after the exile down to the time of Alexander the Great. Originally, however, Tishri (Sept.-Oct.) was the first month (see Exod. xxiii, JE; xxxiv, J). Josephus and the Mishnah make a distinction between a sacred and a secular year, beginning respectively with Nisan and Tishri. This is, however, a distinction about which the scriptures know nothing, though in the P laws as to feasts, &c., Nisan opens the year: see Josephus, *Antiq.* i. 3, 3, and Schürer, *Geschichte*(4), &c., i. 32 ff. (E.V. i. 1, 38 ff.).

The commissioners had spent three months (cf. verses 16 f.) in the work of trying the cases. That the evil was not entirely removed is proved by Neh. xiii. 23, 26-28; cf. Neh. ix. 2.

18-44. *Lists of 'the men who had married strange women'*: see on ver. 17. This list must have been carefully preserved in the city or temple archives. Even the fertile brain of the Chronicler could hardly have invented these names and what is said in connexion with them.

The grouping of the persons involved follows closely that of the lists in ch. ii (see introductory remarks to) and in Neh. vii.

I. Temple officers:

1. Priests, seventeen in number: 18-22.

had married strange women: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brethren, Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. And they gave 19 their hand that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their guilt. And of the sons of Immer; Hanani and 20 Zebadiah. And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and 21 Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah. And of 22 the sons of Pashhur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah. And of the Levites; 23 Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah (the same is Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer. And of the singers; 24 Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and

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2. Levites, six in number: 23.

3. Singers (2, see on ver. 24) and porters (3), five in number: 24.

II. The laity (Israel), eighty-six in number: 25-43. We do not read here of Nethinim (see p. 63 f.) or of Solomon's servants (see p. 64).

18-22. Priests.

18. sons of the priests: render 'priests' and see on ii. 41 and iv. 1.

married strange women: see on ver. 2.

Jeshua: see on ii. 2.

19. they gave their hand: i. e. they entered into a compact: see 2 Kings x. 15; 2 Chron. xxx. 8; Lam. v. 6; Ezek. xvii. 17.

put away: see on ver. 3.

and being guilty . . . a ram: read (with Kuenen and most later scholars), 'and their guilt offering was a ram.' No change in the consonantal, the only original part of the text, is required. The M. T. makes poor Hebrew and (omitting the italicized words inserted by the translators) poorer English.

For guilt offering see Lev. v. 14 ff.

ram of the flock: in Lev. v. 18 'ram.'

(for their) **guilt**: see on ix. 6.

20-22. *Priests*: see on ii. 36-39.

23. *Levites.*

Kelaiah (**Kelita**): see Neh. viii. 7, x. 10.

24. *Singers and porters.* Note that these two classes are mentioned as distinct from the Levites. See p. 61 f.

Eliashib: add (with *Luc.* and 1 Esdras) 'and Zaccur.'

25 Uri. And of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah,
and Izziah, and Malchijah, and Mijamin, and Eleazar,
26 and Malchijah, and Benaiah. And of the sons of Elam;
Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jere-
27 moth, and Elijah. And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai,
Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and
28 Aziza. And of the sons of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hana-
29 niah, Zabbai, Athlai. And of the sons of Bani; Mesh-
ullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, [a]Jeremoth.
30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal,
Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, and Binnui, and
31 Manasseh. And *of* the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Isshijah,
32 Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon; Benjamin, Malluch,

[a] Another reading is, *and Ramoth.*

25–43. *Laymen.* The houses mentioned here occur also in ch. ii. 3 ff. (see on), though in a different order.

25. Israel: i. e. the lay portion of the nation, as in ix. 1 and Neh. xi. 3; see (for the wider sense) x. 1. The name stood for the Northern Kingdom until that kingdom came to a close (1 Kings xxiv. 7, 10), after which it was used for the Southern Kingdom (ii. 50; Jer. ii. 12, 31, &c.), and even for the new Jewish community made up almost entirely of returned exiles (x. 1).

Malchijah: read (with *Luc.*) 'Michaiah.'

26. Jehiel: see on ver. 2.

28. Zabbai: in ii. 9 'Zaccai.' In Hebrew the letters *b* and *c* (*k*) are almost identical, and are therefore constantly confounded by the ancient translators.

29. Bani: a house or clan of the same name is mentioned in ver. 34, copyist's mistake. Perhaps (as Keil, &c., suggest) we should in one of these places read Bigwai (**Bigvai**) (ii. 14). Moreover, whereas the number of offenders belonging to the other houses vary from four to eight, of the house of the second Bani (ver. 34) twenty-seven are mentioned. Probably the text has suffered corruption, several heads of houses having stood originally in the section beginning with ver. 24. Schultz holds that the twenty-seven men of verses 34–41 belonged to different country districts of Judah.

Jeremoth: to be preferred to *qr.* and R.Vm. 'and Ramoth.'

31. (And) *of*: remove the italics and (with LXX, 1 Esdras, many Hebrew MSS.) restore the corresponding Hebrew word (*min*).

Shemariah. Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattat- 33
tah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, Shimei. Of 34
the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel; Benaiah, 35
Bedeiah, [a]Cheluhi; Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib; Matta- 36, 37
niah, Mattenai, and [b]Jaasu; and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei; 38
and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah; Machnadebai, 39, 40
Shashai, Sharai; Azarel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah; 41
Shallum, Amariah, Joseph. Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, 42, 43
Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, [c]Iddo, and Joel, Benaiah.
All these had taken strange wives: and [d]some of them 44
had wives by whom they had children.

[a] Another reading is, *Cheluhu.*
[b] Another reading is, *Jaasai.* [c] Another reading is, *Jaddai.*
[d] Or, *some of the wives had borne children*

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34. Uel: read (with *Luc.* and 1 Esdras) 'Joel.'

38. and Bani, and Binnui: read (with LXX, 1 Esdras), 'and of the sons of Binnui.' The difference in the Hebrew is slight.

44. had taken: cf. the Heb. verb rendered 'married' in ver. 2 (see on).

strange wives: Hebrew, as in ver. 2 (see on), 'strange women.'

and some of them, &c.: the M.T. is hopelessly corrupt, and as it stands, means nothing. There is, in the Commentary of Bertheau-Ryssel a statement of many attempts at restoration, not one of them being plausible. It is better to follow the text implied in 1 Esd. ix. 36, reading 'and they put them away with their children.'

Ezra's Subsequent History.

In Neh. i. 1 we pass on at once to the history of Nehemiah, the account of Ezra's activity suddenly coming to an end. Then the thread of Ezra's narrative is resumed in a quite unexpected way at Neh. vii. 73[b], in a context which tells of Nehemiah's life and work, Ezra's name not occurring once. This isolated section (Neh. vii. 73[b]–x) relates to Ezra and his doings, Nehemiah's name coming quite casually in at two places (Neh. viii. 9 and x. 22, see on), and then almost certainly through a copyist's mistake or as an editor's gloss. The contents of this Ezra section in a Nehemiah context may be thus laid out:—

1. The public reading of the law (vii. 73[b]–viii. 12). After the

events recorded in Ezra ix f. it was quite natural to proclaim publicly the law by which the people's lives were to be regulated.

2. Observance of the Feast of Tabernacles (viii. 13-18).

3. Repentance and prayer of the people on finding that their conduct came so far short of the law now read (ix).

4. The people make a covenant to observe the law (x).

That the section thus analysed originally followed Ezra x, and belongs strictly to Ezra's biography, not Nehemiah's, appears on several considerations.

1. This agrees with the order of events in 1 Esdras, where the reading of the law (1 Esd. ix. 37–55, cf. Neh. vii. 73^{b}–viii. 12) follows the expulsion of the strange women (1 Esd. viii. 68–ix. 36, cf. Ezra ix f.).

2. The sequence of events in Josephus (*Antiq.* xi. 5) is identical with that of 1 Esdras, though too much weight should not be put on this, as throughout Josephus follows the apochryphal 1 Esdras rather than the canonical Ezra.

3. In the section under consideration (Neh. vii. 73^{b} ff.) Ezra suddenly steps forward, becoming the chief agent, and as suddenly disappears. Omitting this part of Nehemiah the rest of the book is continuous and homogeneous.

4. In the corresponding portion of 1 Esdras and Josephus no mention is made of Nehemiah, which is in favour of omitting his name from Neh. viii. 9 and x. 22.

5. In this section Nehemiah comes before us as 'the Tirshatha' (viii. 9, x. 1), an epithet used besides only of Sheshbazzar (vii. 65, 73; Ezra ii. 63), whereas in the undisputed Nehemiah memoirs he is called *pekhah* or governor (Neh. v. 14 f., 18).

6. We read in viii. 13 of 'heads of fathers' *houses*' as often in Ezra (see p. 52 f.). In Nehemiah the technical terms are quite different (see ii. 16, iv. 8, 13, v. 7, 17, vii. 7, xii. 40, xiii. 11).

7. Many turns of expressions frequent in Nehemiah are absent from these chapters, e. g. 'According to the good hand of my God upon me' (ii. 8, 18), 'God put into my heart' (ii. 12 and vii. 5). Moreover Nehemiah speaks of himself in the first person. In Neh. viii. 9, x. 1 he is spoken of in the third person—though the name has to be rejected in both cases. See on the verses.

8. Removing the section in question, Neh. vii. 73^{a} and xi. 1 (see on the latter) join well together, whereas there does not seem to be any connexion between Neh. x and xi. Most of the above points were noticed and the same conclusions drawn by J. D. Michaelis in his annotated translation into German of the Hebrew Bible (1769–83, 13 vols.).

Such is the view accepted by virtually all modern scholars, though Keil vigorously defends the historical continuity of these chapters (see Com., Introd.), holding with Bertheau (not his editor Ryssel), Schultz, &c., that during the events here related Nehemiah

was present at Jerusalem, though Ezra occupied now the chief place, as the work (reading the law, &c.) was much more on the lines of his activity.

From the fact that Nehemiah's name occurs twice it has been commonly inferred that the final editor of Ezra-Nehemiah took this section to belong to Nehemiah's own history, but this is more than doubtful (see on Neh. viii. 9 and x. 1). It is more likely that the copyist, piecing his skin-leaves (called 'doors' in Jer. xxxvi. 23) to form the parchment roll, mixed the parts, his mistake being perpetuated by other copyists who followed. It is also in this way probably that we are able to explain the present position of Ezra iv. 6–23 (see on), which has nothing to do with the time of Ezra or the events amid which he moved.

It seems clear that so far as biblical sources go the account of Ezra's work closes with Ezra x adding Neh. vii. 73^{b}–x. Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary (see Keil, Bertheau, Ryle, &c.) it cannot be that Ezra and Nehemiah were both present at Jerusalem during the course of the events narrated in Neh. vii. 73^{b}–x, though it is quite certain that Ezra was, and held the first place.

Conspectus of the Chief Events in Ezra's Life

according to Ezra vii–x and Neh. vii. 73^{b}–x, attaching Ezra iv. 7–23 to the records of a later time, perhaps to the events among which Nehemiah moved.

1. Ezra and his party begin the journey from Babylon (vii. 6 f., viii. 15, 31).

Date: year, the 7th of Artaxerxes I (458 B. C.); month, 1st; day, 1st.

2. They reach Jerusalem (vii. 8 f.).

Date: year, same; month, 5th; day, 1st.

3. A three days' rest, on the 4th day gifts and offerings being presented for the Temple (viii. 12).

Date: see under 2 above.

4. Ezra amazed and grieved on finding that many of the Jews had married heathen women (ix).

Date: None given, but this must belong to the days immediately following the arrival. The evil was too palpable and serious to escape the vigilant eye and the uncompromising orthodoxy of Ezra.

5. Appointment of a commission to inquire into the matter and to report (x. 1–16).

Date: year, 7th of Artaxerxes I; month, 10th (Tebet); day, 1st.

6. The commission meet; its finding (x. 17–44).

Date: year, 8th (see above, 5); month, 1st (Nisan); day, 1st.

7. Departure of the people to their several cities—their ancestral homes (Neh. vii. 73[b]).

Date: year, as in 6? (inferred, not stated); month, 7th (Tishri); day?

8. Public reading of the law at Jerusalem (Neh. viii. 1–12).

Date: year, 8th of Artaxerxes I (inferred, not stated); month 7th (Tishri); day, 1st. Ezra reads the law publicly the same day on the morning (?) of which the people depart for their several homes.

9. Observance of the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. viii. 8–18).

Date: year, as in 8, above; month, 7th (Tishri); day, 15th to 22nd.

10. The people acknowledge their sin (Neh. ix) and make a vow (covenant) to put away the heathen wives (Neh. x).

Date: year, as above in 6–9; month, 7th (Tishri); day, 24th (two days after Tabernacles) and (apparently) following days.

For details as to the several episodes enumerated above see on the passages with which they are connected.

Ezra's death. We have no authoritative record of Ezra's career beyond what is told us in Ezra and Neh. vii. 73[b]–x, though Josephus[1] is probably right in saying that he passed away before Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem. We have no definite ground for believing that they ever met, nor does either refer to the other —this is quite in the manner of Israel's ancient leaders (e.g. Micah and Isaiah, &c.).

When and where Ezra died we are not reliably informed, though Jewish tradition has, with its usual readiness and fertility of resource, supplied what history lacks. Summing up the work of Ezra Josephus[2] says: 'After he had obtained this reputation among the people he died an old man and was buried in a magnificent manner at Jerusalem.' He is said in the Talmud to have breathed his last at Zamzagu on the Tigris while on his way from Jerusalem to Susa, whither he was journeying for the purpose of conferring with Artaxerxes about Jewish affairs. His monument on the bank of the Lower Tigris is still shown and greatly revered by Eastern Jews.

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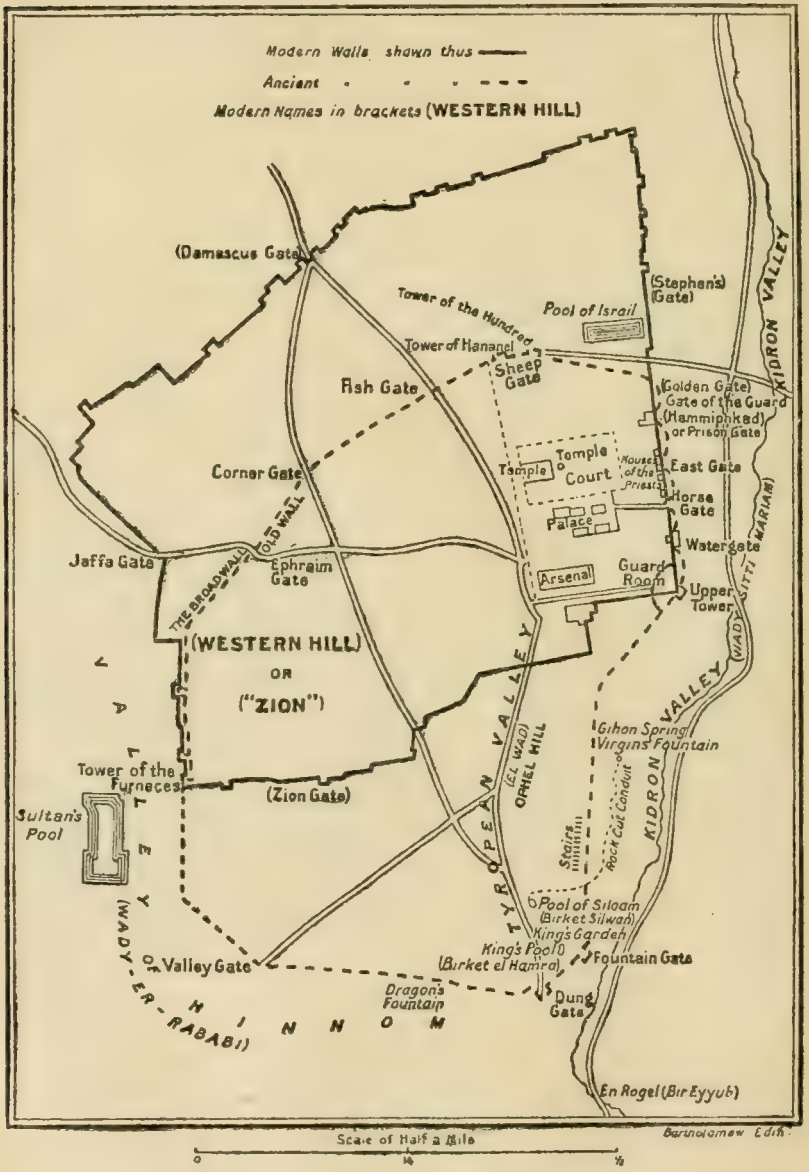
[1] *Antiq.* x. 5.

[2] *Antiq.* x. 5. 5.

PLAN OF JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF NEHEMIAH.



NEHEMIAH

General outline of Nehemiah (omitting vii. 73b–x).

1. Neh. i. 1–vii. 5: Nehemiah's description in the first person of the earlier of his two journeys from Persia to Jerusalem. This narrative, so simple, naïve, and homogeneous, has hardly ever been questioned.

2. Neh. vii. 6–73a: List of Jews who returned from Babylon (based on Ezra ii).

3. xi–xii. 26: Several lists.

4. xii. 27–43: Dedication of the walls of Jerusalem.

5. xii. 44–47: Organization of the Levites. Measures for their support.

6. xiii. 1–3: Separation of Israelites from people of mixed blood.

7. xiii. 4–9: Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem. Expulsion of Tobiah from the Temple; sanctity of the latter maintained.

8. xiii. 10–14: Measures for the support of the Levites, see 5.

9. xiii. 15–22: Means employed for securing the observance of the Sabbath.

10. xiii. 23–29: Vigorous protest of Nehemiah against mixed marriages.

11. xiii. 30 f.: *Résumé* of Nehemiah's work.

Between Ezra and Nehemiah.

It is assumed throughout the present volume that Ezra and Nehemiah were never at any time contemporaries at Jerusalem (see p. 157 f.).

Between Ezra x, adding Neh. vii. 73b–x and Neh. i. 1 there is no historical connexion, and a space of some ten years must lie between. One may compare the break here with that between Ezra vi and vii, though the gap in the latter is much wider. Perhaps portions of Ezra-Nehemiah which dealt with the intervening years in both cases have been lost.

So far as concerns Ezra's own work it may be legitimate to conclude that it came to an end with what is told us in Neh. x (or viii ?).

The evils of mixed marriages had been dealt with and to a large

1 [N] THE [a] words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.
Now it came to pass in the month Chislev, [b] in the

[a] Or, *history* [b] See ch. ii. 1.

extent mitigated. Ezra had probably died (say about 457 B. C.), for in the history of Nehemiah's work at Jerusalem (Neh. i–vii. 5) he is not mentioned, nor elsewhere after 457 B. C.

In Neh. i. 1 we are all at once transported to 445 B. C., the year of Nehemiah's first arrival at Jerusalem. What happened in this interval of some dozen years? For the answer we are left largely to conjecture. Probably Ezra iv. 6–23 (see on) belongs here. The Jews seem to have set about the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem, perhaps before Ezra passed away, and at his instigation. But the Samaritan party became once more a source of annoyance and a hindrance to their pious kinsmen, and, making sundry charges of disloyalty, &c., against the Jews, induced the Persian king to issue an edict putting an end for the time to the work and (probably) imposing fresh burdens and disabilities upon the builders. It is to these latter that Neh. i. 3 seems to allude.

It has been objected that if previous attempts at repairing the wall had been made they would have been mentioned in Neh. ii. 3 ff. Moreover (it is added), if earlier prohibitory edicts had been issued their withdrawal would have been spoken of when Nehemiah is allowed to begin the work. It is forgotten, however, that in Ezra-Nehemiah we have what is evidently but an imperfect sketch of the history of the time, a collection of fragments from which it would be perilous to draw *a priori* conclusions.

I. 1–11. Nehemiah's Sorrow and Prayer.

1–3. *Nehemiah receives bad tidings concerning the Jerusalem Jews.*

1. The words of . . . Hacaliah: the original heading to Nehemiah's autobiography (i. 1–vii. 5).

words: better 'acts' (cf. 1 Kings xi. 41 'the acts of Solomon') or as (R. Vm.) 'history.' But the Hebrew is neutral and can in itself bear any one of the above renderings.

Nehemiah: the Heb. = ('one whom) Yahweh comforts'; cf. the meaning of Ezra 'one whom Yahweh helps.' See on Ezra vii. 1. We read of two others bearing the name 'Nehemiah' (see iii. 16 and Ezra ii. 2).

Hacaliah: read (with Böhme, Cheyne, and Budde), 'Khakkel^{e}yah' ('= trust in Yah').

Chislev: Assyr. *Kislîwu*, the ninth month (= our Nov.-Dec.). After the return from Babylon the Jews adopted the Babylonian (Assyrian) month-names instead of their own. See (for both sets of names) Schürer$^{(4)}$, i. 744 ff. (E.V. I. ii. 763 ff.) and on Ezra x. 17.

twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the [a] palace, that 2
Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men
out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews
that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and
concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The 3

[a] Or, *castle*

in the twentieth year: these words are a dittograph from ii. 1, or, more likely, they occur instead of a lower number (19th?) through a copyist passing his eye to the beginning of the next chapter. If we retain the M. T. ch. ii is chronologically prior to ch. i, as the first month (Nisan, ii. 1) precedes the ninth (Chislev, i. 1). But the contents of these chapters make this supposition impossible. See on ii. 1 for the king whose reign is meant.

Shushan = Susa, the capital of ancient Elam, made by Cyrus one of the capitals of the Persian kingdom. Other capitals were Ecbatana, Persepolis, and Babylon. The king held his court at each of these, perhaps alternately. They were really former royal residences of kingdoms once independent. Shushan (Susa), east of the Persian Gulf, is represented by the modern mound of Shush, fifteen miles south-west of Dizful in Persia.

palace: R. Vm. 'castle,' *Luc.* and some MSS. of the LXX *baris*. The Hebrew word seems to denote a fortified place, and hence is applied to the fortified portion of Susa here, in Esther, and also in Dan. viii. 2. In ii. 8, vii. 2 it is used for the citadel or castle of Jerusalem, in 1 Chron. xxix. 1 of the Jerusalem Temple, and in the Sachau papyri (i. 1) Yeb (Elephantinê) and Syenê are so designated.

In Esther ix 'Susa the fortress' is distinguished from Susa the city proper (verses 13–15). Recent discoveries show that the fortified part of the city was separated from the rest of Susa by the river Choaspes. See on Esther ii. 5 and note by Driver on Dan. viii. 27 (*Camb. Bible*).

2. (Hanani, one of my) **brethren**: render 'brothers'; a literal brother is meant as vii. 2 shows.

the Jews . . . escaped . . . captivity: those of the Babylonian exiles who had come to Jerusalem, the remnant of such. No one without a previously adopted theory to maintain (as Kosters, &c.) would interpret these words as referring to Jews who had never left the home-land, holding that as yet no return had taken place. According to Kosters and v. Hoonacker the first return of exiles was under Ezra, who is held to have laboured subsequently to Nehemiah, see p. 25 ff.

3. The reference seems to be to the situation implied in Ezra iv. 7–23, see above, p. 84 f.

remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are
4 burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of
5 heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O LORD, the God of

Kosters[1] and Marquart[2] say that it is to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. that this verse refers. But this cannot be.

1. The event implied must be something recent or Nehemiah could not have been surprised to hear of it. How could Nehemiah in 445 be astonished at hearing of the great ruin of Jerusalem and its Temple 140 years and more ago?

2. Nehemiah would be sure to know of the royal edict stopping the building of the walls (Ezra vi. 17 ff.), yet he could hardly at so great a distance have known of the sufferings of the Jews at home or the actual condition of the city.

3. There seems to be in Neh. vi. 6 an underlying reference to an earlier edict against the building of the walls: 'It is reported . . . that thou and the Jews think to rebel' (against the royal edict, &c.).

the province: see on Ezra ii. 1.

in great affliction, &c. to end: see ii. 3, 17.

wall . . . broken down: to make further defiance impossible: see 2 Kings xiv. 13.

4–11. *Nehemiah's grief; his confession and prayer, both the latter bearing a strong liturgical character.*

4. With Nehemiah's manifestations of grief compare those of Ezra (Ezra ix. 3–5, x. 6).

sat down: see Job ii. 13.

certain (days): better 'some (= 'a few') days.'

the God of heaven: see on Ezra vi. 9.

5. O LORD: Heb. Yahweh (Jehovah), always in the E.VV. written LORD with small capitals except in four (R.V. six) places, where Jehovah occurs. For some centuries B.C. this sacred name was avoided, and instead of it the Hebrew word for Lord (*Adonai*) substituted as is the custom among modern Jews. It is this substituted word which is translated in the LXX and other versions (not the French). This is, however, the only example of the use in Nehemiah of this Divine name. It is the distinctive name for Israel's God as such.

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[1] *op. cit.* p. 60. [2] *op. cit.* p. 57 f.

heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and 6
thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: yea, I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against 7
thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgements, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the 8
word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples:

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the great and terrible God: see iv. 14, ix. 32; Deut. vii. 21, x. 17; Dan. ix. 4.

that keepeth covenant, &c.: see ix. 32; Deut. vii. 9; 1 Kings viii. 23, &c.

6. let thine ear now be attentive: so ver. 11; 2 Chron. vi. 40; Ps. cxxx. 2. The **now** of this verse is that of entreaty (Heb. *na*), not the *now* of time (Heb. *'atah*).

thine eyes open: so 2 Chron. vi. 40.

thy servant = 'me' with the added feeling of humility. In respectful address to a superior the word servant is often used to form personal pronouns. Thus 'thy servant' = I or me (Gen. xviii. 3; 1 Sam. xx. 7 f.); 'thy servants' = we or us. See Gen. xlii. 11; Num. xxxi. 49.

day and night: see Acts xx. 31.

confess ... sins ... which we have sinned: see on Ezra x. 1.

7. We (have dealt, &c.): see on Ezra x. 1.

commandments ... statutes ... judgements: found together as summing up the law; also Deut. v. 31, vi. vii. 11, xi. For the distinction between the words, see 'Psalms' (*Century Bible*), vol. ii, p. 254.

which thou commandedst, &c.: see Deut. vi. 1, &c.

8. Remember ... the word: nothing in the O. T. corresponds exactly to the language cited; the nearest equivalent is perhaps Deut. xxx. 1-5; cf. Deut. iv. 27, xxviii. 64. See in Ezra ix. 11 (a similar case).

trespass: see on Ezra x. 2.

9 but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments
and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost
part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence,
and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to
10 cause my name to dwell there. Now these are thy ser-
vants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy
11 great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech
thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy
servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to
fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this

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9. return: the Hebrew means primarily to make a turn, to change the direction; cf. A. V. 'turn.' But it comes to mean more usually 'return.'

unto the place, &c.: the phraseology is Deuteronomic, see Deut. xii. 5, &c., and cf. Ezra vi. 12. The place meant is of course Jerusalem, though it is not mentioned in connexion with the phrase, and Prof. A. Duff has ably argued that a city in the Northern Kingdom is what Deuteronomy originally intended[1].

10. For the phraseology see Deut. vii. 8, ix. 26, 29; and cf. Exod. iii. 19.

redeemed: the Hebrew word (*padah*) is used specially of freeing slaves. For other verbs so rendered see on Ps. lxxiv. 2 (*Century Bible*).

11. O Lord: in Nehemiah only here and iv. 8; see ver. 5 (LORD).

thy servant . . . thy servants: see on ver. 6. Here, as following Lord (not LORD = Yahweh), very appropriate.

Note the apparent paradox in **delight to fear,** but 'to fear God' is the O. T. expression for to reverence and obey Him. See Ps. ii. 11, xxii. 23.

thy name = 'thee' (with emphasis). The word name with the appropriate pronoun ('my,' 'thy,' &c.) is constantly used in the O. T. of God as an emphatic personal pronoun, 'myself,' 'thyself.' In Ps. lv. 6 'unto thee' stands in parallelism to 'unto thy name.' This usage arises from the employment of 'name' in the sense of revealed character, the person as named and thus known: see on Ps. lxxix. 9, lxxxiii. 16, cxxiv. 8 (*Century Bible*); cf. 'thy servant' in ver. 6, &c.

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[1] See *Old Test. Theology,* vol. ii, 'The Deuteronomic Reformation.'

day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. (Now I was cupbearer to the king.)

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth 2
year of Artaxerxes the king, when wine was before him,

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mercy: in the Old English sense of pity, compassion. The Hebrew words here = 'make me' (lit. 'thyself,' see on ver. 6) 'to be an object of compassionate regard in the eyes of this man' (i. e. the King of Persia).

I. 11c–II (end). NEHEMIAH REQUESTS AND OBTAINS THE KING'S PERMISSION TO VISIT JERUSALEM FOR THE PURPOSE OF REBUILDING THE WALLS AND RESTORING SOCIAL ORDER.

i. 11c–ii. 8. *The king's favourable response to Nehemiah's request.*

11. Now I was cupbearer, &c.: these words belong to the next chapter, which it appropriately introduces.

cupbearer: Heb. lit. = 'one who causes' or 'gives to drink.' The absence of the definite article (though in the A.V. it is inaccurately prefixed 'the cupbearer') suggests, what is otherwise known to be the case, that the king would have two or more cupbearers who relieved one another: see 1 Kings x. 5; 2 Chron. ix. 4; Gen. xl. 2 ('chief of the cupbearers,' E.VV. wrongly 'of the butlers'); 2 Kings xviii. 17. The duties of the office are enumerated by Xenophon (*Cyro.* i. 3 f.) and by Herodotus (iii. 24). The cupbearer's principal occupation was to taste the wine before he handed it to the king, as a proof that it was free from poison (see ii. 1). Those who held the office had, at least in the time of Ktesias (d. *circa* 390 B.C.), to be eunuchs, and it is not improbable that Nehemiah was one, for we never read of his having a wife, though this last is true of Ezra too. The title *Rabshakeh* in 2 Kings xviii. 17 and the parallel passage Isa. xxxvi. 2 is Babylonian, and means 'principal military officer' (so nearly all modern scholars) and not 'cupbearer,' as Ryle, Whitehouse, and (latterly) Zimmern[1] say. Nehemiah, as cupbearer, had peculiarly favourable opportunities of becoming intimate with his royal master.

ii. 1. **the month Nisan**: see on Ezra x. 17.

the twentieth year of Artaxerxes: i. e. of Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), whose reign began in 464 B.C. and ended with his death in 424 B.C. The twentieth year of his reign would be therefore 444 B.C.

It was in the seventh and eighth years of the same king that Ezra accomplished his work at Jerusalem (see Conspectus, &c., p. 157 f.).

There were, however, two later Persian kings bearing the same name, viz. Artaxerxes II (Mnemon, 404–359 B.C.) and Artaxerxes III (Ochus 359–338). Since the bare name is used in Ezra

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[1] *KAT.*(3) 651.

that I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now
2 I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. And the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of
3 heart. Then I was very sore afraid. And I said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof

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and here, much discussion has arisen as to which is intended (see on Ezra vii. 1). There has been similar disputing as to the Darius of Ezra iv. 24, v. 1, &c., since there were other Persian kings of that name: see on the above passages.

(when wine was before) **him:** read (with LXX) 'me' = 'when I had charge of the wine' (Siegfried, &c.). The error in Hebrew arose through a haplography, i. e. writing the same letter (*waw*) twice, a common clerical mistake.

Now I had not, &c.: read and render, 'Now I had not been beforetime sad,' omitting **in his presence** and removing the italics from **beforetime.** The difference in Hebrew is in one only of the consonants. The M. T. = 'Now I was not sad in his presence,' which contradicts the facts.

2. Why is thy countenance sad? &c.: the cupbearer was expected to be cheerful and cheering. That Nehemiah's sadness was not due to physical illness was proved by his appearance and the fact that he had not requested leave of absence.

sorrow of heart: i. e. 'sadness,' &c., the noun being cognate with the adjective rendered 'sad.' In 1 Sam. xvii. 28 the same Hebrew words are rightly rendered 'naughtiness of heart.' Both adjective and noun have primarily ethical meanings. Cf. our 'bad' or 'good health,' 'bad' or 'good tidings,' &c.

Then I was very sore afraid, lest, having explained his trouble and his request, the king might deny him the favour it was in his mind to ask.

3. Let the king live for ever: the usual formula at the opening of an address to the king: see Dan. ii. 4, iii. 9. See also 1 Kings i. 31 (Bathsheba to Solomon).

the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres: Nehemiah was therefore a Jerusalemite by descent, i. e. he belonged to the tribe of Judah.

place: in Hebrew the word used for house, but also for a containing place or space, e. g. Isa. iii. 20, 'perfumed boxes,' lit. 'houses of perfume'; Exod. xxvi. 29, xxxv. 34, 'places ('houses') for the bars'; Ezek. xli. 9, 'place ('house') of the side cham-

are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, 4
For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the
God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please 5
the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy
sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the
city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And 6
the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,)
For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou

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bers.' Cf. also the numerous place-names compounded with *Beth* (house), as Bethlehem = 'House of Bread,' i. e. place where wheat is abundant, &c.

Ryle and Bertholet are hardly justified in pressing the literal sense 'house,' from the fathers having been buried in the house (cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 1; 1 Kings ii. 34), i. e. in the garden attached to the house (cf. 2 Kings xxi. 18).

The ancients attached great importance to the honour of proper interment, and paid the deepest respect to the burial-places of ancestors. See on Ps. lxxix. 3 (*Century Bible*).

consumed: lit. 'eaten,' as in ver. 13. In ver. 17, i. 3, &c., the word is 'burnt.'

4. For what dost thou make request? Either Nehemiah had indicated in words that he had a request to make or his appearance suggested the king's question.

I prayed: i. e. inwardly. Nehemiah was pre-eminently a man of prayer; see iv. 4, 9, v. 19, vi. 9, 14, xiii. 14.

God of heaven: see on Ezra vi. 9.

5. If it please the king, &c.: the regular formula when making proposals to the king. It occurs very often in Esther (see i. 19, iii. 9, &c.).

build: the Hebrew word means also, as here, 'to rebuild.' So Ezra v. 13, 15, 17, vi. 3, &c. Here it refers specifically to the repairing of the walls, as in Ezra iv. 12, 16, 21.

6. the queen, &c: the queen (called Damasias according to Ktesias) here separately mentioned on account of the influence she had over her husband. Cf. Queen Esther and the part she played in directing her husband's policy. Persian kings acted much as their queens guided them.

The word rendered **queen** occurs besides only in Ps. xlv. 9, and judging from Assyrian etymology it denotes strictly a member of the royal harem, a palace woman. But it was the principal member who acted as queen, she having all the more influence because she owed her supreme position to her continued charms. Such a woman had in those times far more completely the ear and heart of the husband than a one-wife queen could have.

return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set
7 him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please
the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond
the river, that they may let me pass through till I come
8 unto Judah; and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the
king's [a] forest, that he may give me timber to make beams
for the gates of the castle which appertaineth to the house,

[a] Or, *park*

I set him: better read with Winckler[1], 'he set me.'

time: a period of twelve years—the space of Nehemiah's first absence – could hardly have been in the mind of either the king or his cupbearer. It probably grew to that through unexpected difficulties in the building and in the administration.

7. letters: see on Ezra iv. 8. The letters would be written in Aramaic, the language of diplomacy at this time, see p. 13. We are probably to think of parchment rolls as the material (see Jer. xxxvi. 1, 2, 4), ink (Jer. xxxvi. 18), and an iron stylus (Jer. xvii. 1) or reed pen (Ezek. ix. 2) being employed in writing. See on Ezra iv. 8. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets prove that in 1400 B. C. letters were written on clay tablets dried in the sun or baked in a kiln, and that they were in the cuneiform character. The Tel-el-Amarna letters were baked in kilns, see on Ezra vi. 2.

governors beyond the river: the 'pekhahs' or 'governors of Transpotamia': see on Ezra iv. 10 (for the designation Transpotamia) and on Ezra viii. 36 and ver. 9 (for governors, &c.).

that they may let me pass, &c.: suggesting the existence among the governors of a feeling of opposition to the project Nehemiah had at heart. See on Ezra iv. 7–23, and at p. 160, where it is held that this section belongs to a time not long before Nehemiah's first visit.

8. Asaph: otherwise unknown. The name suggests that he was a Jew, and therefore probably a native of Jerusalem.

king's forest: since Ewald's time most scholars identify this with the 'Garden of Solomon,' close to Etam, some half-dozen miles to the south of Jerusalem (see Josephus, *Antiq.*, viii. 7, 3). The forest of Lebanon is too far away to be intended here; the timber wanted must have been near.

The word rendered **forest** is the Hebrew form of 'paradise,' originally a Persian word. The same word in Eccles. ii. 5 and Cant. iv. 13 means 'park.'

for the gates of: Mommert (iv. 4) connects these words with wall and house, rendering 'for the gates of the castle . . . and for

[1] *Altor. Forsch.* ii, Series iii, 2. 473.

and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. Then I came to the 9 governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's

the city wall and for the house,' &c. But the Hebrew cannot yield this translation.

the castle: Heb. *hab-birah*, as in ver. 1 (see on). A fortress on the north side of the Temple, first mentioned here and vii. 2. It is referred to later in 1 Macc. xiii. 52; Acts xxi. 37 and xxii. 24. It seems to have been erected between 536 and 445, probably at the time the Temple was restored about 520, though nothing more definite is known. Later names were Baris and Antonia (see Josephus, *Wars*, i. 3, 3, &c.). Mommert, curiously (iv. 4), understands by the castle the whole wall-enclosed Temple area.

according to the good hand of my God: see ver. 18 and Ezra vii. 6, viii. 18, 22.

9–16. *Nehemiah's arrival at Jerusalem; his tour of the city and his impressions.*

9. governors beyond the river: since Transpotamia ('beyond the river') had but one satrap, the word 'governors' must, as in the Sachau papyri, include the local governors appointed by the satrap, often, as in the case of Ezra and Nehemiah, and in accordance with Persian policy, one of the race inhabiting the subsatrapy. The use of the word *pekhah* (plur. here) proves that it does not invariably mean, as Meyer holds, satrap. When for purposes of administration Darius I divided his greatly extended kingdom into twenty satrapies, carrying out more fully the policy of Cyrus, he made Babylon and Assyria one satrapy, Syria, Phoenicia, and the island of Cyprus another, and Egypt with contiguous lands a third[1]. On crossing the Euphrates Nehemiah would pass through one satrapy only until he reached Jerusalem: see p. 50. On his way from Shushan he would be likely to make a halt at Babylon, where a satrap resided. The letters referred to in ver. 7 would include one to this satrap.

Leaving Babylon and crossing the Euphrates, he would be at once in what the present writer calls Transpotamia. The direction would now lie towards Carchemish, avoiding the Arabian and Syrian deserts. Thence the party would turn southwards to Damascus, where the satrap of Transpotamia almost certainly dwelt, though before reaching the Syrian capital he would be likely to encounter local governors, Arab sheikhs, &c., to whom he would present what one may call royal passports. Then the company would strike

[1] See Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iv. 523 ff. (E.V. vi. 315 ff.); Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii. 49 ff.

letters. Now the king had sent with me captains of the
10 army and horsemen. And when Sanballat the Horonite,
and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it

southward in the direction of Samaria, taking, it is probable, the west Jordan route, or perhaps that east of the Jordan, crossing the river at one of the fords between the sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. At Samaria Nehemiah would meet the local subsatrap or governor, who was probably Sanballat. To the latter he would present the usual credentials which, as explaining the purpose of Nehemiah's journey, would awaken in the local authorities the liveliest feelings of antagonism, for it was but recently (see pp. 84 f. and 160) that they had thwarted the execution of the very task which the new Jewish leader had royal authority to complete.

captains, &c.: Ezra made his journey without a military escort (Ezra viii. 22), perhaps, as Bertheau says, because he was ashamed as a professed believer in Yahweh to question the sufficiency of Divine guidance.

10. Sanballat: the best Heb. MSS. write 'Saneballat.' In the LXX and Vulg. it is 'Sanaballat' (one *l* in *Luc.*), in Josephus 'Sanaballet(es).' The word is Babylonian, and means 'one whom Sin' (the Moon-god) 'preserves alive.'

There can now be no doubt that Sanballat was governor, i.e. subsatrap in Samaria, exercising at the time, it is extremely likely, jurisdiction over Judah and even over other adjoining districts (see iv. 7, Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites). He is spoken of in the Sachau papyri as governor (*pekhah*) of Samaria, and Josephus says[2] (though his date is wrong, see p. 179) that he was sent by the last king' (Darius Codomannus, 338–331) 'into Samaria.' Nehemiah nowhere calls Sanballat governor, yet he brings him into connexion with Samaria (see iv. 2).

the Horonite: this is generally held to mean a native of Beth-Horon, north-west of Jerusalem, at that time belonging to Samaria (see Joshua xvi. 3, 5, &c.). This agrees with what Josephus says[3] ('He was a Kuthean'), and with iv. 2 properly interpreted (see on). Moreover, the language in iv. 2 suggests that he spoke to the Samaritans in their own (his own?) language. So Buhl[4] and G. A. Smith[5].

Schlatter, Winckler, and Bertholet say that the word denotes 'a native of Horonaim,' a south Moabite city (see Isa. xv. 5; Jer. xlviii. 3, 5, 34, and the Moabite stone). This is thought to explain why he constantly appears in conjunction with Tobiah the Ammonite, but see below.

Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite: the fact that his

[1] § 29. [2] *Antiq.* xi. 7, 2. [3] Ibid.
[4] *Geog. des alt. Pal.* 169. [5] *Jerusalem*, ii. 336 f.

grieved them exceedingly, for that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. So I came 11
to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in 12
the night, I and some few men with me; neither told

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name and that of his son are compounded with Yah (short writing of Yahweh) shows that he was a Yahweh worshipper, though it is no proof of his being a Jew. Those who belonged to the Samaritan party were genuine Yahwists or they would not have wished to unite in restoring the Temple. They differed from Jews in having wider sympathies and a broader creed, and also in having foreign blood. We know of them almost exclusively from what their rivals have written. It is hardly likely that 'Ammonite' means here, as G. A. Smith is inclined to think[1], a native of the Benjamite village Chephar-ammoni (Joshua xviii. 24), as the word occurs often elsewhere and invariably in the ordinary sense. Besides, according to xiii. 4 ff., he was not of Jewish descent. Why should not this man, though racially an Ammonite, having entered the service of a Yahwist, have embraced his master's religion and then changed his name according to a common custom?

servant: the word so translated means often a slave (Gen. xii. 16; Exod. xxi. 2, &c.), but it is also commonly used for officials of the court (see Gen. xl. 20, l. 7; Exod. x. 7, &c.) and for other officials of quite respectable position (see 2 Sam. x. 2, 4, royal messengers, &c.).

It is probable that Tobiah was the secretary of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria: see vi. 17. The word translated 'servant' is by no means inconsistent with this. Winckler's guess[2] (it is no more) that Tobiah was Sanballat's son is not worthy of serious consideration.

it grieved them, &c., because their former successful opposition was now apparently to come to nought: see p. 160.

a man: Heb. 'a human being' (= Gr. *anthropos*, L. *homo*), used contemptuously. The ordinary word for man as distinguished from woman is *ish* (= Gr. *aner*, L. *vir*). Perhaps, however, the sense is 'that any one (man or woman) had come,' &c.; the use of the same Hebrew word in ver. 12 favours the latter explanation.

11. Nehemiah took no notice of the Samaritan ill-will, but went on his way. With the royal letters even Sanballat could not hinder his progress.

With ver. 11 cf. Ezra viii. 32, which is almost word for word the same.

12. in the night: to avoid being seen.

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[1] See *Encyc. Bib.* i. 559. [2] *KAT.*(3) 296.

I any man what my God put into my heart to do for Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the
13 beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night by the valley gate, even toward the dragon's well, and to the

what my God put into my heart: see vii. 5 and Ezra vii. 27.

the beast that I rode upon: i. e. an ass, less likely a mule. The Hebrew word is a generic one for horses, asses, and mules, and has nearly always a collective sense. Nehemiah had but one animal, to obviate suspicion; his servants would walk, just as is done in Palestine at the present time.

13–15. *Nehemiah's tour of inspection.* It will be seen that he began and ended at the Valley Gate, having made, it is probable, a complete circuit of the city wall. Dr. E. Robinson[1] held that Nehemiah, when he reached the King's Pool (ver. 14), descended from the beast, which was hindered from going further by the ruin heaps, and proceeded along the Kidron way, looking at the Temple walls, &c. Returning to where he left his beast, he made the journey back to the Valley Gate by the way he came. So Professor F. F. Wright, who says[2] that having approached the city wall by the northern road Nehemiah had no further need to examine the northern walls. If, as the present writer believes, Nehemiah followed the entire course of the wall, one must think of him as on foot guiding the beast where the heaps of débris made riding impossible. See a further statement of various views in Mommert, vol. (*Theil*) iv. 5 ff. We have in these verses, in iii. 1–32 and in xii. 27–43, the completest data to be obtained for reconstructing the plan of ancient Jerusalem. Notwithstanding the mass of learned and ingenious matter which has been written on these chapters, much uncertainty still attaches to details. References might be made to the large volume with a small volume as appendix by Carl Mommert, *Topographie des alten Jerusalem* (1900–1907); *Jerusalem*, &c., by George Adam Smith, D.D., 2 vols. (1907); *Ancient Jerusalem*, by Selah Merrill (1908), and L. B. Paton, *Jerusalem in Bible Times*. Dr. Smith's work cannot be too highly commended for its sanity, learning, and interesting style: see especially vol. i. 31 ff. As a guide to the notes to these topographical sections the map of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah will, it is thought, be found useful, see opposite p. 159.

13. valley gate: the name suggests that this gate opened upon the Valley of Hinnom (*Wady-er-Rababi*), the word translated 'valley' (*gai'*) being used in the O. T. of this one only of

[1] *Bib. Researches*, i. 474. [2] *PEF.*, 1896, 172 f.

dung gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were

the Jerusalem valleys[1]. It must have lain near the south-west corner of the walls. In 1894 Dr. Bliss[2] uncovered the remains of an ancient gateway at the south-west corner of the ancient walls which he, Guthe, Mitchell, and G. A. Smith concluded to be the site of this gate, though the distance from the Dung Gate is rather more than 1,000 cubits (see iii. 33), and further excavation has shown that the remains are not very ancient. Formerly this gate was placed where the Jaffa Gate now stands: so Thenius, Keil, Schick, Ryle, and Harvie-Jellie (on 2 Chron. xxvi. 9, *Century Bible*).

the dragon's well: we know it lay somewhere along the direction of the wall between the Valley and Dung Gates, but where exactly we have no data to determine. It has been commonly identified with the modern *Bir Eyyûb* (Job's Well), which probably represents the site of En-Rogel (see 1 Kings i. 9, &c.), but this would be too far to the south-east and not along the lie of wall. Perhaps, as G. A. Smith[3] surmises, it was a spring, due to an earthquake, and only temporary in duration, for it is not mentioned before or after the time of Nehemiah. It may have received its name from the belief that a mythical dragon resided in the fountain: so W. Rob. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*(2) 172, and most moderns: but this is very problematical. The LXX calls it 'the Fig Fountain,' which may be correct, i. e. 'the fountain near which figs grow.' *Luc.* supports the M. T. The Hebrew is much alike for both. The Syr. renders, 'the Gate of the Hills.'

the dung gate: situated probably near the point where the Tyropoeon Valley (*el-Wad*) joins the Valley of Hinnom (*Wady-er-Rababi*), perhaps where the modern *Bab-el-Magharibe* stands. Some identify this gate with the Harsith Gate (Gate of Potsherds) mentioned in Jer. xix. 2. This last was perhaps the gate through which potsherds were thrown, or rather, outside which on a rock, as now, broken earthenware was crushed into cement for plastering cisterns, &c.[4] The name Dung Gate (Heb. and Syr., 'Ashheap Gate'; *Luc.*, LXX, Vulg., 'Dung Hill Gate') may have been given, as Stade and others after him say, because the refuse of the city was conveyed through it. Gall,[5] followed hesitatingly by Bertholet, sees in the Hebrew name a disguised form of Tophet,[6] itself a disguised form of Tephet, and so explains: 'The Gate leading to the Molek (a disguised form of *melek*[7]) sanctuary where children were sacrificed.'

and viewed: the Hebrew tense is continuous = 'I kept on

[1] See G. A. Smith, *Jerus.* i. 171. [2] *PEF.*, 1894, 149 ff., 243 ff.
[3] *op. cit.* i. 74, cf. 111.
[4] *PEF.*, 1904, p. 156. [5] *Altis. Kult.*, 72.
[6] See on Ps. cvi. 38 (*Century Bible*).
[7] See on Ps. cxxxii. 2 (*Century Bible*).

broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with
14 fire. Then I went on to the fountain gate and to the
king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was
15 under me to pass. Then went I up in the night by the

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viewing.' The Hebrew verb as written in the M. T. (so LXX) means 'to break,' and has been here explained: 'I broke my way through the walls,' i. e. the fragments of walls. Rashi interprets literally, and says that Nehemiah's purpose was to break down the portions of wall that remained, so that next day the Jews might be willing to assent to his proposal—a very unlikely thing for him to do. By changing a diacritical point on one letter (*sh*, *s*)—making no difference in the original unpointed Hebrew text—we obtain an Aramaic verb, which occurs in the intensive form (*Pi.*) in the sense to hope, wait for (see Esther ix. 1; Ps. civ. 21, cix. 166, cxlv. 15; Isa. xxxviii. 18). But the sense 'think,' then (with the preposition here) to 'think about,' though upheld by Baer, Ginsburg, and Guthe, cannot be got from the Aramaic, in which the simple verb means 'to believe,' 'trust,' and the intensive (*Pa.*) 'to hope for,' nor from the O. T. passages cited above, in which the verb (*Pi.*) = 'to hope,' 'wait for.' Either we must keep the verb in the M. T. and explain as above, 'to break through' = to make way among (the walls), or we must decide the text to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read *shomer* for *shober*, which requires very little change in the Hebrew. This verb means often 'to closely scrutinize,' as in 1 Sam. i. 12; Job xxxix. 1, &c. The preposition following often introduces the object.

walls: so Heb., M. T., Syr., and *Luc.* But LXX and Vulg. have the sing. 'wall.'

consumed: see on ver. 3.

14. fountain gate: probably the gate which lay just outside the King's Pool, whence it had its name. It lay at the junction of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys, at the southernmost end of what was once a busy street. It would be a little to the north-east of the Dung Gate: see plan of Jerusalem opposite p. 159.

the king's pool: probably = the modern *Birket-el-Hamra* ('the Red Pool'): see plan of Jerusalem, opposite p. 159. It seems to have received its name from the fact that it stood near the entrance to the royal gardens which it watered: see 2 Kings xxv. 4; Jer. xxxix. 4, lii. 7.

no place, &c.: on account of the broken-down walls.

the beast that was under me: i. e. so long as I rode.

to pass: lit. 'to cross,' 'pass over,' referring to the rubbish in the way. See on Esther iv. 17.

brook, and viewed the wall; and I turned back, and
entered by the valley gate, and so returned. And the 16
[a] rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither
had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to
the nobles, nor to the [a] rulers, nor to the rest that did the
work. Then said I unto them, Ye see the evil case that 17

[a] Or, *deputies*

15. in the night: it was still night, and Nehemiah wishes to lay stress on this. The Palestine night varies only between eleven and thirteen hours.

the brook: better 'wady': the Hebrew word (*nakhal*) = the Arabic *wady*, i. e. a winter torrent valley. This is the word always used of the Kidron, which must therefore be here meant. *Gai'*, the word in the phrase 'Valley of Hinnom,' denotes a narrower opening and one without a brook. Nehemiah went up the Kidron valley, from which he could, especially on the higher ground, have a good view of the Temple wall and of much of the Temple itself.

turned back: Heb. 'turned,' that is its primary sense and its sense here. Having passed through the wady, he would, following the wall, make a tour towards the east, encompassing the walls until he was once more at the Valley Gate.

and so returned: the verb is here rightly translated. It is a trick of the author, a word-play, to use the same verb in two different senses in the same paragraph.

16–18. *The Jews, on hearing Nehemiah explain his project, agree heartily to co-operate with him.*

16. rulers: Heb. (*seganim*) equivalent in this book to the word so common in Ezra and translated 'princes': see on Ezra ix. 1. Nehemiah brought it from Persia, though it is of Babylonian origin. It occurs but once in Ezra (ix. 2), and then almost certainly as a gloss.

nobles: lit. 'freedmen,' Nehemiah's equivalent for 'elders' (see on Ezra x. 8). It occurs in the Sachau papyri (i. 19), 'Bagohi (governor of Judah) and the *Khorim*' (not as Sachau *Khērim*) 'of the Jews,' where 'elders' makes good sense.

nor to the rest, &c.: render, 'nor to the others who had been doing the work.' The Heb. permits this rendering, and the sense requires it. The reference is to what had been done before Nehemiah's arrival, but was stopped by the Samaritan party (see p. 160). There is not the slightest need to explain with Meyer and Bertholet, 'the others who were performing the religious rites of the Jews.'

17. See on ver. 3.

we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a re-
18 proach. And I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also of the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for the good
19 *work*. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against
20 the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his

18. rise: see on Ezra x. 4. 'Let us set about building,' &c.

So they strengthened, &c.: better (with *Luc.*, LXX, Vulg., not Syr.) passive: 'So their hands were strengthened,' &c. See for the antithetic phrase Ezra iv. 4.

19. *Opposition.*

For **Sanballat** and **Tobiah** see on ver. 10.

Geshem: see vi. 2 and 6. In the latter verse it has the form 'Gashmu,' which occurs repeatedly in the Sinaitic inscriptions [1], and should probably be read here and in vi. 2. The final *u* is the sign of the Semitic nominative, of which there are survivals in the O. T. (see G. K., § 90 n.). He seems like Tobiah [2] to have accepted the religion of the Samaritans and to be now identified with them against the Jews. He might have been head of a clan which had settled in Samaria. We know that Sargon transplanted the Arab tribe Thamud to Samaria. There is a third alternative; Geshem might have been commissioned by his tribe, still dwelling in their Arab homeland, to represent them in Samaria's opposition to the Jews. In either of the two latter alternatives the Arabs, of whom Geshem was chief, might have accepted Samaritanism as a religion, or their opposition might have been due to a general uprising of the peoples around against the Jews and their designs.

will ye rebel? In reference probably to the correspondence recorded in Ezra iv. 7-23. See esp. ver. 15.

20. *Nehemiah's answer of faith.*

The God of heaven: see on Ezra vi. 9.

[1] See Euting, No. 58, 167, 345.

[2] See on ver. 10.

servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

will prosper us: see i. 11.
his servants: see on i. 6.
arise: see on Ezra x. 4.
build: i. e. rebuild; see on ver. 5.
no portion: see Joshua xx. 25; 2 Sam. xx. 1.
right: the Hebrew word occurs in the Sachau papyri, i. 27, in the sense of 'a fixed share,' which is therefore almost certainly its meaning here.
memorial = 'something to be remembered by,' see Ezra xvii. 14; Num. xvi. 40, xxxi. 54; Mal. iii. 16. Had the Samaritans and their allies been fully incorporated into the Jewish community and allowed to share in the rebuilding of Temple and city walls their names would have been handed down as those who helped in the restoration of the city and its sanctuary.
Nehemiah's reply makes it clear enough that the Samaritans would have had no quarrel with the Jews if they had been permitted to unite with the latter in their undertakings and privileges.

III. Names of those who Repaired the Several Portions of the Wall.

This chapter is of the utmost importance for the understanding of the topography of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, and much has been written on it by scholars who have made a special study of the subject, such as Wilson, Warren, Guthe, Bliss, Schick, G. Adam Smith. Neh. iii. 13-15 and xii. 27-43 are also of great importance in the same direction.
The text in this chapter is unfortunately very corrupt in parts (see on verses 1, 9) and the account defective owing to the dropping out of words through the carelessness of copyists. The Ephraim Gate is not mentioned, though it must have been named in the original account (but see on ver. 6 and on xii. 39); the description of the east wall is evidently incomplete (see on verses 25, 27), and in several cases persons are said to have repaired a second portion who are not mentioned in connexion with a first (see on ver. 9).
It has been inferred by Torrey[1] and Kent[2], from the special features of vocabulary and style in this section, that the Chronicler, or at least another than Nehemiah, is the author. But nowhere either in Ezra or in Nehemiah is there so detailed a description of Jerusalem as in this chapter, and one might expect this peculiarity

[1] *Composition*, &c., 37 f.
[2] *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, p. 352.

3 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren

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of subject-matter to carry with it corresponding peculiarities of language, especially where so many technical and geographical terms are employed. On the other hand, the personal note is very prominent throughout, and it is clear that Nehemiah continues in the first person to tell his own tale.

The course taken by the description is regular, though that has been denied. The following outline sets forth the probable direction taken by the narrator in the account he gives. Verses 1–5 deal with the north wall.

1. The Sheep Gate in the north, about the middle of the northern extremity of the present Haram area, formed the starting-point (1 f.).

2. Thence westward passing the towers of Hammeah and Hananel to the Fish Gate (3–5).

3. The western wall (6–12).

4. The southern wall and gates, including the Valley and Dung Gates (13 f.).

5. The south-east wall and gates (15–27).

6. The north-east wall—completion (28–32).

1–5. *The North and North-west Wall.*

1. Eliashib (= 'God will restore'; in *Luc.* the form is *'El-Yashub* = 'God will turn or return'). Several persons with this name are mentioned in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles: see 1 Chron. iii. 24 (a descendant of Zerubbabel); Ezra x. 14, 29, 36, &c. The 'Eliashib the high priest' of verses 1 and 20 was son of Joiakim and grandson of Jeshua (see on Ezra ii. 2), the contemporary of Zerubbabel. He is called 'the priest' (= high-priest, see 2 Kings xi. 9 f., xvi. 10 f.) in Neh. xiii. 4. For the high-priesthood see on Ezra vii. 5. According to xii. 10 Eliashib was the great-grandfather of Jaddua, the contemporary of Alexander the Great, see on Ezra x. 6.

Later on there arose a schism between Nehemiah and his reforming party on the one hand, and Eliashib and the laxer (or broader?) party on the other, the principal occasions for which were the following incidents: Being related by marriage to Tobiah (see on ii. 10), Eliashib made it possible for the latter to enter the priesthood though not of priestly descent, and actually allotted him one of the chambers in the Temple area (see xiii. 4 f.). All this happened in Nehemiah's absence, as he himself is careful to tell us (xiii. 6). On his return this anomaly was rectified, Tobiah being expelled from his office and chamber. Soon after this courageous act the Jewish reformer felt it his duty to dismiss from the priesthood a grandson of Eliashib because he had allied himself by marriage with Sanballat the Horonite (xiii. 28). Of the

the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of [a] Hammeah they sanctified it, unto the tower of

[a] Or, *The hundred*

latter Josephus gives a different account, for it is certain that in *Antiq.* xi. 7, 2 and 8, 2 f. he has this incident in mind. According to him, a certain Manassi, son of Jaddua (and therefore great-great-grandson of Eliashib), married Nikaso, daughter of Sanballat the Kuthaean. He was expelled from the priesthood for refusing to put her away, whereupon he took refuge among the Samaritans, who welcomed him as the son of their governor and were glad to appoint him priest of their rival Gerizim temple. Josephus, it will be seen, dates the incident about the time of Alexander the Great, if not later, but there is abundant evidence that the Samaritan party had been organized many decades before this, and there is proof in the Sachau papyri (i. 29) that Sanballat was a contemporary of Nehemiah (*circa* 440 B.C.).

rose up . . . and . . . builded = 'set about building': see on x. 4.

the sheep gate: lit. 'gate of the small cattle (sheep and goats)': so also ver. 32 and xii. 39. It lay near the north-east corner of the Temple area, a little to the west of the modern St. Stephen's Gate, and hence its restoration fell appropriately to the lot of the priests. It is likely that just outside this gate there was a market at which sheep and other animals were sold, chiefly for purposes of sacrifice, the Temple being near, but also, it would seem, for other purposes. This gate is no doubt the one referred to in John v. 2.

they sanctified it, and, &c.: render, 'they laid its beams and set up its doors even to the tower of Hammeah (the hundred) and to the tower of Hananel.'

they sanctified it (and): this is never said of any other gate or of any part of the wall. Read (making a slight change in the Hebrew), 'they laid its beams' (see ver. 3). If the M. T. is retained the consecration of the gate might have been due to its nearness to the Temple, to its market for sacrificial animals, and also to the fact that it was repaired by priests. The second occurrence of **they sanctified it** is to be deleted as a copyist's mistake (dittography).

the tower of Hammeah: both this tower and that of Hananel were probably situated upon the rock on which Antonia (see ii. 8) stood; they were therefore somewhat to the west of the Sheep Gate.

Why is the 'Tower of the Hundred' (*Hammeah*) so called? We can but guess, as we are not told. Some say because it was

2 Hananel. And next unto him builded the men of Jericho.
And next to [a]them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.
3 And the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build; they
laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the
4 bolts thereof, and the bars thereof. And next unto them
repaired Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz.

[a] Heb. *him.*

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100 cubits high, others because it was reached by 100 steps, a third opinion being that it was defended by 100 men. Perhaps Hammeah was a man's name: see below. It is mentioned besides here only in xii. 39.

tower of Hananel (= 'whom God pities or favours': a man's name): from xii. 39 and Jer. xxxi. 8 we infer that it stood to the north of the city, and from verses 1–3 and Zech. xiv. 10 that it was between the Sheep and Fish Gates.

It is probable that these two towers formed parts of one fortress, perhaps that subsequently called Antonia: see on ii. 8.

2. (next unto) **him,** i.e. Eliashib, his co-workers being ignored. Perhaps, however, we should read 'them,' as also in ver. 8. The singular and plural are frequently confounded in such phrases throughout this chapter. The Hebrew means literally 'at his hand,' i.e. joining hands with (in a free, not literal, sense).

the men of Jericho: the Jericho contingent repaired the part of the wall that was nearest to their home (the priests preceding them because their part touched the Temple). For the site of Jericho see on Ezra ii. 34.

(next to) **them:** Heb. 'him.' The E.VV. rightly correct the M. T.: see earlier note on this verse.

Zaccur: nowhere else mentioned.

3. the fish gate (see xii. 39): situated probably at or near where the modern Damascus Gate stands. It was separated from the two towers mentioned in ver. 1 (Antonia?) by the strip of wall mended by the Jerichoites and Zaccur. It was in all likelihood so called because outside of it there was a fish market: see on ver. 1, 'Sheep Gate.' According to Zephaniah it seems to have been in the new part of the city: see 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

sons of Hassenaah: see vii. 38 (Senaah) and Ezra ii. 35.

doors thereof: i.e. the two-leaved door (hence the plural), filling in the space of the gateway: see on vi. 1.

bolts: the sockets right and left of the doors, into which the ends of the horizontal bars were slid when the door was locked. They were used for house doors (Cant. v. 3) as well as for city gates.

4. repaired: lit. 'strengthened,' made to be a strong wall, capable of holding out against besiegers.

And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana. And next unto 5
them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their [a]lord. And [b]the old gate 6

[a] Or, *lords* Or, *Lord*
[b] Or, *the gate of the old* city or, *of the old* wall

Meremoth: as he repaired a double portion (ver. 21) it is natural to think that he was wealthy and the family of which he was head numerous. From Ezra viii. 33 we learn that he was son of the high-priest Uriah.

Meshullam: through the marriage of his daughter to Tobiah's son (vi. 18) he was related to that leader of the Samaritan party. In the present undertaking, however, if not in all things, he is a co-worker with Nehemiah. Zerubbabel had a son of the same name (1 Chron. iii. 19).

Baana: see vii. 7, x. 27, and Ezra ii. 2.

5. Tekoites: Tekoah was the home of the prophet Amos (Amos i. 1, vii. 14), though he exercised his prophetic ministry in the Northern Kingdom. It lay some ten miles to the south of Jerusalem, and we might therefore have expected to find the men of Tekoa rebuilding the southern wall which was nearest to them: see ver. 2 ('men of Jericho'). Its omission from the lists in Ezra ii, Neh. vii may be caused by the fact that Jews had not at the time implied settled in it, or not in large numbers.

nobles (Heb. *addīrīm*, lit. 'strong ones'): so x. 29; 2 Chron. xxiii. 20. It is another Hebrew word (*Khōrīm*) that is so translated in ii. 16 (see on), iv. 14, v. 17, vi. 16, vii. 5, and xiii. 17.

put not their necks, &c.: for the figure see Jer. xxvii. 12 and Matt. xi. 29.

their lord: i. e. Nehemiah, governor of the district, and therefore of Tekoa. Nehemiah's opponents were for the most part members of the upper classes, since those guilty of marrying 'strange women' belonged chiefly to those classes. Jewish and other expositors understood the word 'lord' to mean God.

6–12. *The Western Wall.*

6. the old gate: the Hebrew ('Gate of the Old,' see R. Vm., 'gate' being masculine and 'old' feminine) does not allow of this rendering. It is far better with G. A. Smith to make a trifling change in the Hebrew, rendering 'the gate of the second (city).' The Fish Gate (see on ver. 3) was also, it would seem, in the new or second city. It is now generally held that this gate is identical with the 'Corner Gate' (2 Kings xiv. 13; 2 Chron. xxvi. 9; Jer. xxxi. 38) and the 'First Gate' (Zech. xiv. 10), where both names occur.

repaired Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the bolts thereof, and the bars
7 thereof. And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, *which appertained* to the throne of the
8 governor beyond the river. Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, goldsmiths. And next unto

This gate would therefore stand north-west of the city, a little to the east of the Ephraim Gate. We ought to have mention made next of the Ephraim Gate if it were on the line of Nehemiah's wall. But it might not have needed repair, or G. A. Smith may be right in saying that this gate was built on a lower wall. Cf. 'above the gate of Ephraim,' xii. 39, see on.

Joiada: not the priest of that name, xii. 10, 22, xiii. 28.

Meshullam: apparently a common name, see on ver. 4.

7. Read and render, 'And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite (together with) the men of Gibeon and Meronoth who belong to the dominion (rule) of the governor of Transpotamia.'

Mizpah: better (with Bertheau, Meyer, Bertholet, Löhr, &c.) read 'Meronoth,' which makes a good parallel with (men of) Gibeon: Mizpah is represented by its rulers (verses 15, 19). If we retain the name we must understand by it another Mizpah—one further to the north.

which appertained (to): since these words are implied in the Hebrew the italics should be removed.

throne: here = 'rule' or 'dominion' as in Ps. lxxxix. 29, 36. The representatives of Gibeon and Meronoth (? Mizpah) were under no obligation to help in the work as they were under the jurisdiction of the Persian satrap of Transpotamia. Their generous offer of service was therefore all the more deserving of mention.

Another interpretation given to these words is that those named repaired as far as that part of the wall in or near which the Persian satrap had a residence. But we do not elsewhere find the remotest reference to such a residence, though Schick was of opinion that in his digging he came upon the remains of one[1].

8. (next unto) **him:** see on v. 2.

goldsmiths: read, 'one of the goldsmiths,' prefixing *ben* (= son, then 'one of'). Cf. the next clause 'one (lit. 'son') of the apothecaries.'

[1] See *ZDPV.* 1885, 269 f.

him repaired Hananiah one of the [a] apothecaries, and they [b] fortified Jerusalem even unto the broad wall. And next 9
unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of half the district of Jerusalem. And next unto them 10
repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabneiah. Malchijah the son of Harim, and 11
Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired another por-

[a] Or, *perfumers* [b] Or, *left*

apothecaries: lit. 'mixers'; what are meant are sellers of perfumes, spices, and the like, much in demand for cosmetic purposes in Eastern countries. We must not take the word to mean 'chemists' in the modern sense.

fortified: Heb. 'left,' which can have no meaning. The E.VV. imply a slight change in the text (*y*^{e}*az*^{e}*zu* for *ya'az*^{e}*bu*), which must be accepted. Many futile attempts have been made to retain the M. T. and give it a passable meaning.

the broad wall: this lay, according to xii. 38 f., between the Tower of the Furnaces (see on ver. 11) and the Ephraim Gate. Why was the wall broader in this part? No one knows. Perhaps owing to the lie of the land (Stade) or because here the first and second walls overlapped (G. A. Smith?), or it might have been made so for strategic purposes (Ryle).

9. district: Heb. 'something round,' cf. Arabic, then a circuit, district. Jerusalem seems for administrative purposes to have been divided into halves. See verses 12, 16, 17, 18, where other half districts are referred to, and note on ver. 22.

10. (next unto) **them**: read 'him' and see on ver. 2. If we keep **them** we must understand it to refer to **Rephaiah** and his party.

even: omit with some MSS., Syr., *Luc.*, and many editors.

11. Harim: see Ezra ii. 32, 39.

(Pahath-moab (see on Ezra ii. 6))... **another portion**, lit., 'a second measured portion,' the same words in verses 19, 20, 21, 24, 27, 30: see Ezek. xlv. 3, where the same noun is translated 'measure.' It is evident that in some cases the same persons repaired two portions of the wall; cf. verses 21 and 4, 27 and 5. In other cases, as here, persons are said to repair a second portion though nothing has been said of a first portion: so, besides the present verse, verses 19, 20, 30. In ver. 18 we must read 'Binnui' as in ver. 24 for 'Bavvai.' In all the other cases verses or portions of verses describing the repair by the same workers of a first part have dropped out.

12 tion, and the tower of the furnaces. And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Hallohesh, the ruler of half
13 the district of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the bolts thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits
14 of the wall unto the dung gate. And the dung gate repaired Malchijah the son of Rechab, the ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem; he built it, and set up the doors

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and the tower, &c.: read (with LXX), 'even as far as the Tower,' &c.

tower of the furnaces (or 'ovens'): Schick identifies it with the David Tower (*el-Qal'a*) near the Jaffa Gate. It was certainly somewhere on the wall line between the Jaffa and Valley Gates, probably near the south-west corner of the modern city[1]. It may have had its name from the fact that it joined on to the Baker's street (or Bazaar?) of Jer. xxxvii. 2. Some think it was the tower built by Uzziah on the Corner Gate (2 Chron. xxvi. 9), but it was more to the west than that.

12. half the district: see on ver. 9.

he and his daughters: render 'it (the half district) and its dependent places' (villages, towns, and cities): see xi. 25, 27, where Heb. 'daughters' is rendered in the E.VV. 'towns' in accordance with Heb. idiom. This form of expression meets us very frequently in the Priestly Document.

13 f. *Southern Wall and Gates.*

13. valley gate: see on ii. 13.

Zanoah: about a dozen miles due west of Jerusalem, now called *Zanua*. See xi. 30 and Joshua xi. 34.

bolts: see on ver. 3.

a thousand cubits: how could the same batch of workers repair the gate and more than the third of a mile of wall? Perhaps the number engaged was large, or the needful repairs in the wall were few and slight (see on ver. 6); or it may be that the text is defective, other names having fallen out.

14. dung gate: see on ii. 13.

Beth-haccherem: better *Beth-hakkerem* = 'place of the vineyard': see Jer. vi. 1. Usually identified with the Frank Mount (*Jebel Furudis*), a little to the south-east of Bethlehem.

he built it: Heb. 'he would build it,' which is intolerable:

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[1] Paton (*op. cit.*, p. 99) identifies the site with that of Maudslay's scarp.

thereof, the bolts thereof, and the bars thereof. And the 15
fountain gate repaired Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the
ruler of the district of Mizpah; he built it, and covered
it, and set up the doors thereof, the bolts thereof, and the
bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of [a] Shelah by
the king's garden, even unto the stairs that go down
from the city of David. After him repaired Nehemiah 16

[a] In Isa. viii. 6, *Shiloah*.

read (with *Luc.*, LXX) 'he' (i.e. Malchijah) 'and his sons' (repaired), and add (as *Luc.*, LXX, cf. ver. 15) 'and they covered it.'

15–27. *The South-east Wall and Gates.*

15. fountain gate: see on ii. 14.

the district (see on ver. 9) **of Mizpah:** distinct from the city of that name (see ver. 19). But Meyer and Bertholet simplify and perhaps (as they claim) restore the text in verses 15 and 19, reading, ver. 15 'Shallum . . . the ruler of half the district of Mizpah. 19 Ezer . . . the ruler of half the district of Mizpah.' The two parts of the district of Mizpah are then represented. There are no external authorities for these changes, as the corruption, if real, is too old.

pool of Shelah: this is no doubt the modern *Birket-es-Silwan* into which the fresh waters of the Virgin's Spring (the Gihon of 1 Kings i. 33, &c.), after passing through the celebrated tunnel, empty themselves. The name *Shelakh* ('sent,' or 'what is sent'?) is identical with the *Shiloakh* of Isa. viii. 6 and the Siloam of John ix. 7. It must have laid within the walls so as to be beyond the reach of invaders [1]. Ryle identifies this pool with the modern *Birket-el-Hamra*, a little to the south of the above site.

the king's garden: see 2 Kings xxv. 4; Jer. xxxix. 4, li. 7. It lay probably within the walls (because too precious to be outside) near the mouth of the Tyropoeon.

stairs, &c.: steps on the rock leading down from the Ophel (Sion) fortress to the pool.

the city of David: primarily the 'stronghold of Zion' taken by David from the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 6 ff.) which became the citadel of Jerusalem. It was situate on the southern slope of Ophel, and therefore a little to the south of the area covered by the complex of Temple buildings, see *DB.* 'Temple,' fig. 1. Then the phrase came to denote, as here, that part of Jerusalem which was built close to the Temple and royal palace, though never in the O. T. is it used for the whole city [2].

[1] See 2 Chron. xxxii. 3 f.; G. A. Smith, *Jerus.* i. 86.

[2] G. A. Smith, *Jerus.* i. 154, and Psalms, vol. ii (*Century Bible*), 368 ff.

the son of Azbuk, the ruler of half the district of
Beth-zur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of
David, and unto the pool that was made, and unto the
17 house of the mighty men. After him repaired the Lev-
ites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired
Hashabiah, the ruler of half the district of Keilah, for his
18 district. After him repaired their brethren, Bavvai the
son of Henadad, the ruler of half the district of Keilah.
19 And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the
ruler of Mizpah, another portion, over against the going
20 up to the armoury at the turning *of the wall*. After him

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16. half the district of Beth-zur: see ver. 17 and on ver. 15 for other districts thus divided.

Beth-zur = the modern *Bethṣur*, about a dozen miles to the south of Jerusalem. See Joshua xv. 58; 2 Chron. xi. 7.

sepulchres of David: see 2 Chron. xxxii. 33 (burial-place of Hezekiah). Perhaps this royal cemetery was situate south of the modern St. Stephen's Gate where there is now a Moslem necropolis. This would hardly disagree with 1 Kings ii. 10.

pool . . . made: i. e. an artificial not a natural pool, the language suggesting that it was a newly made one. Most recent authorities think the reference is to the pool of Hezekiah (see Isa. xxii. 9–11).

the house of the mighty men (= warriors): probably what is meant is the site (with ruins?) of the royal barracks built originally by David (see 2 Sam. xvi. 16, xxxiii. 8).

17. the Levites: only one is mentioned; possibly some names have dropped out, or the one mentioned may represent a clan.

Bani: see ix. 4.

Hashabiah: see Ezra viii. 19, 24 (a different person).

half the district, &c.: see on verses 15, 16.

Keilah = the modern *Kila*, some sixteen miles south-south-east of Jerusalem; so Tobler and most: see Joshua xv. 44; 1 Sam. xxiii. 1 f.; 1 Chron. iv. 19. Mühlau denies the identification on the ground that the modern town is on the lowlands while Keilah must have been among the mountains of Judah.

18. their brethren: i. e. the kinsmen of the Hashabiah clan who took under their care the other half of the district of Keilah.

Bavvai: read (with LXX) Binnui, as in ver. 24; cf. x. 10; see on ver. 11.

19. Ezer . . . Mizpah: see on ver. 15.

another portion: the clause telling of Ezer's first portion

Baruch the son of [a] Zabbai earnestly repaired another portion, from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. After him repaired 21
Meremoth the son of Uriah the son of Hakkoz another portion, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib. And after him repaired 22
the priests, the men of the [b] Plain. After [c] them repaired 23
Benjamin and Hasshub over against their house. After [c] them repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of

[a] Another reading is, *Zaccai.* [b] Or, *Circuit* [c] Heb. *him.*

has fallen out; where so many names are concerned the wonder is that the text has been as well preserved as it is: see on ver. 11.

armoury: Heb. 'arms,' 'weapons,' then, it is generally assumed (though without analogy or proof, 'the place where they are kept,' 'arsenal.' We might render quite literally 'over against where one goes up to the arms' (i. e. where they are kept).

the turning: see 2 Chron. xxvi. 9. What is meant is a part of the wall that bends inwards; so verses 20, 24 f. It is the antithesis of 'the corner' (= a bend outwards) in ver. 24.

20. Zabbai: so LXX and *ket*, cf. Ezra x. 28; Ar., Syr., Vulg., and *qr* read 'Zaccai,' cf. Ezra ii. 9. In the Hebrew the difference is hardly perceptible.

earnestly: omit (with LXX and Ar.). The Hebrew word is simply a dittograph of the following verb ('repaired'), which in Hebrew resembles it closely. *Luc.*, Vulg. read, 'towards the mountain,' making a slight change in the text. The Syr. reads another verb ('he took').

another portion: the first has in this case also been omitted: see on ver. 11.

turning: see on ver. 19.

21. Meremoth . . . another portion: see ver. 4, where the first portion is mentioned (cf. Ezra viii. 53).

from the door . . . to the end of the house of Eliashib (see on ver. 1), whence it may be concluded that the high-priest's house was along the line of wall, and that it was of considerable extent. The text and meaning are clear enough, notwithstanding the difficulties which Ryssel and Siegfried see or, rather, create.

22. Plain: Heb. (*kikkar* for *kirkar*) = 'what is round.' Then 'a portion of land,' 'a district.' It is the technical term for the low-lying district about the Jordan, now called 'The Ghor' (see Gen. xix. 17, &c.; cf. Mal. iii. 5).

23. (After) **them:** Heb. 'him,' see on ver. 2. Perhaps the name and work of one man were described in a lost clause.

24 Ananiah beside his own house. After him repaired
Binnui the son of Henadad another portion, from the
house of Azariah unto the turning *of the wall*, and unto
25 the corner. Palal the son of Uzai *repaired* over against
the turning *of the wall*, and [a] the tower that standeth out
from the upper house of the king, which is by the court
of the guard. After him [b] Pedaiah the son of Parosh
26 *repaired.* (Now the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel, unto the
place over against the water gate toward the east, and the

[a] Or, *the upper tower . . . from the house of the king*
[b] Or, *Pedaiah the son of Parosh* (*now . . . Ophel*) repaired *unto &c.*

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24. Binnui . . . another portion: see on ver. 18.
turning . . . corner: see on ver. 19.

25. Translate: '(After him repaired) Palal . . . over against the bend (inwards) (*of the wall*) and (over against) the upper tower that stands out from the royal palace (lit. king's house) which (tower) is towards (=in the direction of) the Guard Court.'

The first three words of the above (which are in brackets) must be restored: they are necessary for the sense, and are in harmony with the usual formulae in this chapter.

turning: see on ver. 19.

upper: this word belongs to **tower** (as in LXX, Vulg.) not to **house** (as Syr., *Luc.*, and E.VV.), though the Hebrew permits either. There had been many towers, but (as far as we know) only one royal residence.

that standeth out, &c.: this upper tower, instead of coinciding with the wall as was usual, was built against the wall on the outside.

court of the guard, or 'guard court': a part of the palace area in which were kept prisoners whose offences were not serious enough to justify their being thrust into the dungeon (see on ver. 31 and xii. 39). They could have mutual intercourse and receive visits from their friends (see Jer. xxxii. 2, and Driver's note). The part of the wall to which the 'upper tower' was attached formed probably one side of this court, and was accordingly 'towards' the latter. For other projecting towers see ver. 26 f.

After him Pedaiah: in the Hebrew no verb occurs, showing the corruptness of the text. Probably ver. 26[a] (to **Ophel**) belongs to the close of ver. 27. We should then render, 'After him Pedaiah . . . repaired [26[b]] unto the place,' &c.

26. Ophel: see on ver. 27.

water gate: see on Ezra x. 9. We know that it was on the

tower that standeth out.) After him the Tekoites repaired 27
another portion, over against the great tower that standeth
out, and unto the wall of Ophel. Above the horse gate 28
repaired the priests, every one over against his own house.

east of Jerusalem, and that in front of it was an open space capable of receiving a large number of people (see viii. 1, 3, 16). Siegfried and G. A. Smith [1] accept the Talmudic tradition that it was a city gate on the line of the eastern wall, though in Nehemiah's accounts of the inspecting of the wall (iii. 13-15, very brief), the restoring of them (in this chapter), and of their dedication (xii. 27 ff.), nothing is said of the gate except here. It had its name probably because it opened upon the path which conducted to Gihon (=the Virgin's Spring)—such is the old tradition.

Bertholet (*in loc.*) argues from viii. 1, 3, 16 that there must have been a space between the water gate and the city walls—inside the latter. '(The water gate) towards the east' he explains as='to the east of the wall that was now being repaired.' Perhaps there was a water gate in some other part of the wall. In any case the present gate was on the east, though it hardly seemed necessary to say that, as it is of the eastern wall that Nehemiah is now writing. See on Ezra x. 9.

the tower, &c.: the same tower as that similarly described in ver. 25. This tower marked the *terminus ad quem* for Palal, and the *terminus a quo* for Pedaiah.

27. Tekoites . . . another portion: see on ver. 5.

Ophel (lit.'a swelling'): the hill continuing the Temple Hill on the south-west. When mentioned in pre-exilic literature (2 Kings v. 24; Isa. xxx. 14; Micah iv. 8), the word is probably an interpolation. On the other hand, later writers (Nehemiah, Chronicles) having a fondness for 'Ophel,' avoid 'Sion,' suggesting, what abundant other evidence makes clear, that Sion and Ophel were both names for the same plot of ground. Cf. the probable meaning of 'Sion,' 'the summit of a mountain,' and of 'Ophel,' 'swelling[2].' The name Sion came to denote the fortress captured by David from the Jebusites, and then the whole area on which the complex of royal and Temple buildings were placed: see G. A. Smith, *Jerus.* i. 144 ff., 152 ff., and cf. 'Psalms' vol. ii, p. 368 ff. (*Century Bible*).

28-32. *The North-east Wall. Completion.*

28. horse gate: see 2 Kings xi. 16; 2 Chron. xxiii. 15; Jer. xxxi. 40. From the last passage it may be fairly inferred that this gate stood at the eastern extremity of Jerusalem. It was

[1] *Jerus.* i. 86.

[2] Prof. Sayce thinks that Ophel was the ridge of Zion that was cut away by the Maccabees.

29 After [a] them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against
his own house. And after him repaired Shemaiah the
30 son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the east gate. After him
repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the
sixth son of Zalaph, another portion. After him repaired
Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.
31 After him repaired Malchijah one of the goldsmiths unto
the house of the Nethinim, and of the merchants, over

[a] Heb. *him.*

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situated a little to the south of the modern Golden Gate and overlooked the Wady Kidron. It was probably so called because the king's horses used to be led through it to the stables (see Joseph. *Antiq.* ix. 7, 3). Furrer is hardly right in saying that this gate received its name from the horses used in sun worship (see 2 Kings xxiii. 11), as a name with such an origin would have been long since abandoned.

the priests: it was natural for these to see to the repairing of the parts of the wall that were contiguous to their own dwelling in the sacred enclosure.

29. Zadok: see Ezra ii. 37.

Shemaiah: see 1 Chron. xxvi. 6.

east gate: not the 'water gate,' or this name would have been given it here as in ver. 26. Probably it is a Temple gate. Shemaiah seems to have been a Levite (see Ezek. xliv. 11).

30. Hanun . . . another portion: see ver. 13.

the sixth son, &c.: this description is absent from ver. 13, and, besides, it is unparalleled in this list. Guthe and Bertholet are, therefore, probably right in seeing in the Hebrew words a corruption of the name of the place whence Hanun came.

Meshullam: probably the words 'a second portion' have by haplography fallen out (see ver. 4, where he is mentioned as having repaired a portion of the north wall).

chamber: the Heb. word *nishkah* occurs also in xii. 44, xiii. 7. It is an allied form of the word (*lishkah*) so translated in Ezra viii. 29 and x. 6 (see on both).

31. goldsmiths: Heb. 'goldsmith' (singular). But the English translators rightly appended the Heb. *m*, making it plural.

Nethinim: temple servants (see p. 63 f.).

merchants: i. e. such as trafficked in articles connected with the Temple worship, animals for sacrifice, incense, garments, &c. (see Matt. xxi. 12; John ii. 14). They and the Nethinim seem to have occupied a room in the Temple area between them, not for sleeping in, but for performing their duties in the daytime.

against the gate of Hammiphkad, and to the [a] ascent of the
corner. And between the [a] ascent of the corner and the 32
sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

But it came to pass that, when Sanballat heard that we 4
builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indigna-
tion, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his 2
brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do

[a] Or, *upper chamber*

(the gate of) **Hammiphkad**: lit. 'place of visitation' or of 'punishment'; render 'prison' (see Ezek. xliii. 21, where 'the appointed place of the house' (E.VV.) is (*ham*) '*miphkad* of the house'). Probably the word in the present verse stands for a building some distance from (=over against) the wall where ordinary prisoners were shut up. It cannot (with Schultz) be identified with the guard court of ver. 25 (see on) since it is too far to the north (see xii. 39).

ascent of the corner: Heb. 'the upper (part or chamber) of the corner.' Perhaps a tower in a wall corner or angle bulging out and used for recreation or as a place of observation.

32. sheep gate: see on ver. 1. The whole circuit of the walls has been now described.

goldsmiths: here, according to Perles, 'money-changers' (see verses 8, 31).

merchants: see on ver. 31. These two classes must have had some special connexion with the Temple and its requirements, and hence quite appropriately they repair parts of the wall near the sacred enclosure.

IV. (Heb. iii. 33-38). Opposition of the Samaritan Party and the means used by Nehemiah to neutralize it.

1–3. *Taunts of Sanballat and Tobiah* (see on ii. 10).

1. that we builded: better, 'that we were building,' or with Siegfried (as the Heb. permits), 'that we were about to build.' But see ver. 6.

mocked: see ver. 2 f.

2. his brethren: in a loose sense 'his associates' (see ver. 3 and ii. 10).

the army of Samaria: hardly a contingent of the Persian army (Rawlinson), but a body of 'irregulars' belonging to Samaria and the parts around, sworn to defend the Persian authority in all emergencies (see on ver. 7).

What do, &c.: better, 'What are these feeble Jews about to do?'

these feeble Jews? [a] will they fortify themselves? will they
sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they
revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they
3 are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him,
and he said, Even that which they build, if a [b] fox go up,
4 he shall break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God;
for we are despised: and turn back their reproach upon
their own head, and give them up to spoiling in a land of

[a] Or, *will they leave to themselves* aught? Or, *will men let them alone?* [b] Or, *jackal*

will they fortify themselves? The Hebrew (see R.Vm.) yields no sense. Change the Heb. *lahem* ('for,' 'to themselves') to *l'elohim*, and we get excellent Hebrew and sense, 'Will they leave (resign) (the matter) to God?' For the thought see 2 Kings xviii. 30, 32, 35. A similar mistake in the Heb. text (one easily made) occurs in 1 Sam. iii. 13, and Hos. xiii. 2.

an end: i. e. of the rebuilding.

3. A parenthesis, as v. 19, vi. 9, 14.

that which they build, if a fox, &c.: the walls which these Jews may build will be so fragile that one of the foxes with which the ruined walls are infested (Ps. lxiii. 10; Lam. v. 18) will be able to level these new walls to the ground.

fox: the Heb. word is properly so rendered, as is shown by Arabic, Assyrian, and Persian cognates. Some render jackal, but the Arabic and Aramaic word for the latter animal can be proved to be philologically different from the Hebrew word (*shu'al*) in this verse. Of course some things predicated of the fox apply to the jackal, but the word for fox retains its own sense here and elsewhere for all that.

4 f. *One of Nehemiah's ejaculatory prayers*: see for others v. 19, vi. 6, 14, xiii. 14, 22, 29.

The vindictive spirit is characteristic of the age. Though arising from zeal for Yahweh and His cause, as understood, it is itself reprehensible. Cf. the Vindictive Psalms, and see Introd. to Ps. cix (*Century Bible*).

4. we are despised: add one letter and read (with *Luc.*, LXX) 'we are an object of contempt.'

give . . . spoiling: render, 'make them a spoil'; see Ezra ix. 7. The Heb. word *l'izzah* is intended probably as a kind of pun on the word for 'object of contempt' (see above). 'They have made us a *buzah*, make thou them a *bizzah*.'

in a land of captivity: may they, in a foreign hostile land, have the same bitter experience which our nation passed through in Babylon.

captivity: and cover not their iniquity, and let not their 5
sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked *thee* to anger before the builders. So we built the 6
wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half *the height* thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

[a] But it came to pass that, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, 7
and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that [b] the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth; and they conspired all of 8

[a] [Ch. iv. 1 in Heb.] [b] Heb. *healing went up upon the walls.*

5. cover not, &c.: see Ps. lxxxv. 2.

let not their sin be blotted out: see Ps. cix. 14.

they have provoked . . . to anger: the object (Yahweh) understood, as in Ps. cvi. 29; Hos. xii. 15.

before the builders: perhaps Sanballat and his friends had tried to dissuade the builders from their task.

6. *Progress of the work.*

we built: better, 'we continued to build' (i.e. rebuild): see Ezra v. 2.

unto half: *the height* being understood is rightly supplied by the E.VV. But so interpreted we must not regard ch. ii as implying the completion of the walls, or must we (with Siegfried) regard the present clause as a gloss?

7 f. *Conspiracy to stop the work.*

7. Sanballat: see on ii. 10.

Arabians (Arabs) . . . **Ammonites:** i.e. such of these people as belonged to the entourage of Geshem (see on ii. 9), Tobiah (see on ii. 10).

and the Ashdodites: Guthe (with LXX) omits this clause as the Ashdodites are nowhere else mentioned in this connexion. Yet all the other versions have the words, including *Luc.* and some MSS. of the LXX.

the repairing, &c.: the Hebrew word is used of the healing of a wound by the growing of new instead of the old diseased flesh. It is always in the O.T. used figuratively: see Isa. lviii. 8; Jer. viii. 22 (of the restoration of Israel), and 2 Chron. xxiv. 13 (of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, as here).

went forward: lit. 'went up,' following out the figure—the new healthy flesh grew up instead of the old. So in the above passages except in that from Isaiah, where the verb = 'to sprout up' (*ṣamakh*).

breaches: see vi. 1. **very wroth:** see ver. 1.

them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and
9 to cause confusion therein. But we made our prayer
unto our God, and set a watch against them day and
10 night, because of them. And Judah said, The strength
of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much
11 rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And
our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see,
till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and
12 cause the work to cease. And it came to pass that, when
the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us
ten times [a] from all places, Ye must return unto us.

[a] Or, *From all places whence ye shall return* they will be *upon us*

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8. conspired: lit. 'banded (themselves) together,' the verb which (in the passive) occurs in ver. 6 ('was joined'). It is commonly used of secret, treacherous consultations.

to cause confusion = to bring about a panic. The noun occurs besides in Isa. xxxii. 6 only.

9-23. *Nehemiah's prayer and precautions.*

9. set a watch = posted sentinels: see vii. 3.

because of them: Heb. 'in front of them.' The sentinels were set towards the direction whence the enemy was expected to advance.

10. Judah: the country for the people, as often in the O. T.; cf. Moab, Edom, Israel; and cf. 'we' further on in the verse.

rubbish: see ver. 2: until this was cleared away the walls could not be completed.

11. adversaries: the Hebrew word (*sar*) denotes 'strictly those who injure,' and has reference to what they do. The word translated 'enemies' in ver. 15 (Heb. *'Oyeb*) is subjective in its connotation and suggests the unkind feelings harboured, as the other word the harm done.

said: the verb often = 'to say inwardly,' and so 'to purpose.' Perhaps Nehemiah got wind of an actual conversation of the kind.

cause the work to cease: the same verb in Dan. ix. 27 (of sacrifice) in the same sense, and in 2 Chron. xvi. 5 (end) in a somewhat different sense.

12. (the Jews which dwelt) **by them:** near their foes, the Samaritans and their allies.

ten times: i. e. 'many times,' as in Gen. xxxi. 41.

from all places, &c.: the Hebrew is scarcely intelligible. Better amend with Bertholet and read as follows: 'From all the

Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind 13
the wall, in the open places, I even set the people after
their families with their swords, their spears, and their
bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the 14
nobles, and to the [a] rulers, and to the rest of the people,
Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is
great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons
and your daughters, your wives and your houses. And it 15

[a] Or, *deputies*

places where they (the enemy) dwell' (so Syr., the Hebrew consonantal text agreeing) 'they are coming up' (so *Luc.*, LXX, Vulg., Guthe) 'against us.' That is, the Jews who have come from their country homes to take part in the work of rebuilding say over and over, 'from all parts as we came along we saw our foes marching up against us.' It was in consequence of this intelligence that Nehemiah promptly set about the measures detailed in verses 13 ff.

13. The text is almost hopelessly corrupt. Of many attempts at restoration and explanation the following seems to the present writer the best—it is in part his own: 'And I set in the low places of the space behind the wall (which wall was) a great defence: yea, I set the people according to their clans,' &c.

in the lowest parts: Bertheau, Siegfried, &c., making a slight change in the Hebrew, read 'catapults,' the word in 2 Chron. xxvi. 15.

open places: the (one) Hebrew word occurs besides only in Ezek. xxiv. 7 f. and xxvi. 4, 14 with the noun 'rock' in the sense 'a bare,' lit. 'sunburnt place' on a rock. This does not make sense here. It is better to read the Hebrew word for 'shadows' (*ṣelalim* for *sekhikhim*, much more alike in the Hebrew consonant text) and to understand in the sense 'defences,' then (plural of intensity) 'strong defence.' The noun has this sense in Isa. xlviii. 45 (of a wall); Num. xiv. 9 (of Yahweh); Ps. xci. 1. The preposition before the noun is the *beth essentiae* which serves to introduce the predicate (see G. K. 119, i).

spears: used for thrusting at an enemy when near enough. The **bows** were for attacking those at a distance, the **swords** for hand-to-hand fights.

14. I looked, and rose up: an extraordinary combination of words in this connexion. Read with Siegfried (?), Bertholet, and Kent, 'And I saw their fear,' changing one Hebrew word. Cf. **Be not afraid.**

nobles . . . rulers: see on ii. 16.

great and terrible: see i. 5 and ix. 32.

came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.
16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail; 17 and the rulers were behind [a]all the house of Judah. They

[a] Or, *all the house of Judah that builded the wall. And they that &c.*

15. enemies: see on ver. 11.

(that) **it** (was known) = their purpose to march upon the city. This word should be italicized, as it is not in the M. T.

God had brought, &c.: Nehemiah had but used the means; the result was God's doing.

counsel: common in the O. T. in the sense of 'scheme,' 'plan' (see Ezra iv. 5, Isa. xxix. 15, xxx. 1, &c.). We have the same phrase as here 'to bring to nought,' lit. to break 'a plan,' in Ezra iv. 5; 2 Sam. xv. 34, &c.

we returned, &c.: no longer fearing an immediate attack they resumed their work, though (verses 15 ff.) with due regard to the real danger still existing.

16. my servants: the select body chosen by Nehemiah, or allotted him as an army of defence, not the whole of the governor's subjects (Judah): see verses 17, 23, v. 10, 16, xiii. 19.

Of the above, half gave themselves to work (but even those were armed, see ver. 17), the other half to defence.

held the spears: the E.VV. here, as often (see on Ezra x. 16), translate from a corrected text. The M. T. is unidiomatic.

shields: the Hebrew noun here (sing. *māgēn*) stands for the small shield carried by warriors along with spears, &c. Another word frequently translated 'shield' (*sinnah*) denotes one that is larger, requiring sometimes at least another to carry it (see 1 Sam. xvii. 7). The latter weighed about four times as much as the former: see Skinner on 1 Kings x. 16 f. (*Century Bible*). Both words come together in Jer. xlvi. 3; Ezek. xxiii. 24, &c. (buckler (*māgēn*) and shield). Two other words (*shelet*, see Jer. li. 11, and *kidon*, Job xxxix. 23, R.V. javelin) are wrongly translated 'shield.'

coats of mail: leather coats covered with thin plates of bronze (see 1 Sam. xvii. 4). These are portrayed plentifully on the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments of the ninth century B. C. and later. During the winter of 1908-9 Petrie found portions of some of them on the site of the palace of Apries (reigned *circa* 590-570 B. C.) at Memphis.

rulers: the Hebrew word as in ix. 9 (see on), not that in ver. 19 (see on ii. 16).

that builded the wall and they that bare burdens laded themselves, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon ; and the 18 builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles, and to the [a] rulers and to the 19 rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another : in what 20 place soever ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us ; our God shall fight for us. So we 21 wrought in the work : and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let 22 every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in

[a] Or, *deputies*

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were behind, &c. : for the purpose of encouraging and directing in the event of an attack.

all the house, &c. : join on to the first five words in ver. 17, as in the R.Vm. : 'All the house of Judah that builded the wall (17) and they that,' &c.

17. laded themselves : read, with very little alteration in the Hebrew, 'were armed.' So Ryssel (in Kautzsch, *Heilige Schrift*), Guthe, &c. : cf. what follows.

18. he that sounded the trumpet : to give an alarm in case of an attack.

19. nobles . . . rulers : see on ii. 16.

21. The interval between sunrise and sunset varies in Palestine between fourteen hours (in summer) and ten (in winter).

appeared : lit. 'came out.' In Hebrew the idiom for sunrise is 'to come out' (from his night chamber?), that for sunset being 'to enter in' (i. e. to return to his night chamber?). These modes of expression have, it would appear, a mythological origin.

22. Let every one with his servant lodge, &c. : i. e. the master builders and those who helped. Perhaps by the latter we are to understand the burden-bearers (see ver. 17), i. e. those who carried the building materials. Many men of both classes had country homes, to which they seem to have returned of nights. Nehemiah would have them spend the nights at Jerusalem for the security of the latter and for their own safety, for the enemy was now on the alert (see on ver. 12). But it would have gone hard with them if the same men had to work in the daytime and watch

the night they may be a guard to us, and may labour in the
23 day. So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, [a] every one *went with* his weapon *to* the water.

[a] The text is probably faulty.

during the night. It must be therefore that the watching was done by relays, who took duty in turns.

23. my servants: see on ver. 16.

men of the guard: probably the foreign soldiers allowed Nehemiah by the king of Persia when he left for Jerusalem (see ii. 9).

every one *went*, &c.: the best MSS. of the LXX omit this clause, but its sister Greek text (*Luc.*) makes amends by giving a conflate or double text, which Guthe adopts[1]. The M. T. makes no sense, for it is simply 'every one his weapon (missile) the water,' though it is usually explained that every one went dressed having his missile to the place where nature was relieved. If the text is retained, slightly amend the last word and render 'every one with his weapon in his hand.' The M. T. does not permit of the rendering of Grotius: '(but) every one put them (the clothes) off during his ablutions'; cf. Mark vii. 4, 8.

V. Social Distress and the Means Nehemiah took for its Removal.

1–5. *The poor complain of the extortion and oppression of the rich.* Since the work of rebuilding was a labour of love—for there is not a word about payment of wages—the amount of time and energy set apart for the ordinary occupations of life must have been greatly diminished. Moreover, the unsettlement in the country districts and the risks connected with labouring and even residence in them (see on iv. 12) must have brought about almost a paralysis of agricultural industry, greatly to the financial disadvantage of landowners and labourers. One must add to these causes of poverty or lessened wealth the enormous expense of materials for the building and of weapons of defence. The well-to-do would in these circumstances need the money they had lent, and whether needing it or not, would be inclined, when they found the interest no longer paid, to call in what was lent (generally money) or to demand all available pledges.

We do not find among the Jews in Bible times any system of laws or customs governing the relation of lender and borrower,

[1] The text of *Luc.* may be thus translated: 'Every one whom they sent (= who was sent) to the water (i. e. to fetch water) (went) each with his weapon to the water.'

Then there arose a great cry of the people and of their 5
wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that 2
said, We, our sons and our daughters, are many: let us

such, for example, as prevailed among the Babylonians in the time of Hammurabi (*circa* 2200 B. C.), though even among them such laws were less complete than one would gather from Stanley Cook's book, *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi* (1903)[1]. Read as a corrective C. H. W. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters* (1904)[2]. Among the Hebrews, as generally among the Babylonians[3], loans were made to the poor alone for the purpose of meeting special emergencies (bad crops, fire, &c.). Lending as an investment with the expectation of a good return was hardly known in those times. Hence the laws which forbade the claiming of interest are found perhaps first in the Deuteronomic code[4] (yet cf. Exod. xxii. 25, JE), but are continued in later codes[5] and reinforced in the Talmud[6]. The Egyptian laws condemned the charging of interest, and so does the Quran[7]; and the same is true of the Bedouin of the present day if what C. M. Doughty says is correct: 'The malicious subtlety of usury is foreign to the brotherly dealing of the nomad tribesmen[8].'

But that no strict law on this matter existed among the Hebrews is abundantly proved by the present chapter and by parts of the O. T., in which the practice of lending at interest is condemned. Indeed, many of the humanities prescribed in the relation between creditor and debtor, employer and employed, were found at a later time to be impracticable[9]. See Jer. xxxiv. 8 f., and on the whole subject consult Benzinger (*Encyc. Bib.*, 'Law and Justice,' § 16 and his later discussion in *Heb. Arch.*[2] (1907), p. 292 ff.: cf. p. 268 ff.). See further on verses 2, 7 and 11. The fact that at this time there was a capitalist or rich class shows that there had been a large return of exiles many years earlier, for the Jews left behind were poor and belonged to the least important families.

1. a great cry: the same words in Exod. xii. 30. There the cause was the oppression of the Egyptians, here the oppression of brother Jews, which made it harder to bear.

the people: i. e. for the poor, cf. vii. 5.

their brethren the Jews: see above.

2. We, our sons, &c.: read, 'We must give our sons and

[1] See p. 228 ff. [2] See p. 250 ff. [3] Johns, *l. c.* [4] Deut. xxiii. 19 f. [5] Lev. xxv. 36 f.; cf. Ps. xv. 5; Prov. xxviii. 8; Ezek. xviii. 7 f., 12 f., 16 f.

[6] *Baba Meṣiah*, 61 b. [7] xxx. 38. [8] *Arabia Deserta*, i. 318.

[9] See the passages adduced under note 5.

3 get corn, that we may eat and live. Some also there were
that said, We are mortgaging our fields, and our vine-
yards, and our houses: let us get corn, because of the
4 dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed
money for the king's tribute *upon* our fields and our vine-
5 yards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren,
our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into
bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and
some of our daughters are brought into bondage *already*:

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daughters in pledge,' prefixing one Hebrew letter (*'aîn*) to the word translated 'many': no other change in the consonantal text is necessary. See ver. 3, where the same combination of Hebrew words occurs. The participle thus restored has the force of expressing what is to be, must be, as the same participle in ver. 3 'We must,' &c.

Among the Hebrews [1], as among the Babylonians [2], a man could sell his wife and children to wipe off a debt, but they had to be set at liberty in the seventh year [3]: the Babylonians lessened the years of bondage to three [4].

let us get: render, 'so that we may buy,' &c., which the Hebrew allows and the sense demands.

3. We are mortgaging, &c.: render, 'We must mortgage,' &c. The verb (a participle here and as amended in ver. 2) is the same as that rendered above (see on ver. 2), 'give . . . in pledge.' In both cases the meaning is the same, 'to give as security.' Property also returned to the family that originally owned it in the seventh, i. e. in the Sabbatic year; see on ver. 2.

let us, &c.: render, 'that we may buy corn,' as in ver. 3.

4. Nothing fresh appears in this verse, for it is simply a repetition in other words of what ver. 3 says, except that the purpose of the loan is mentioned. Probably it is a marginal gloss on ver. 3 which found its way into the text as many other such glosses have done.

5. flesh: the word has often the meaning 'a human being,' 'a personality'; cf. 'all flesh,' &c. in Gen. vi. 12, 'We are what our rich brethren are; we have the same human characteristics; yet our children are their slaves.'

we bring: render, 'we must bring,' see on ver. 2.

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[1] Lev. xxv. 39-41. [2] Cook, *op. cit.* 229.

[3] Exod. xxi. 2: so originally in Lev. xxv. 40, according to most modern scholars.

[4] *Hammurabi Laws,* No. 117.

neither is it in our power to help it; for other men have our fields and our vineyards. And I was very angry when 6
I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted 7
with myself, and contended with the nobles and the [a] rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I held a great assembly against them. And 8
I said unto them, We after our ability have [b] redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and would ye even sell your brethren, and should they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found

[a] Or, *deputies* [b] Heb. *bought.*

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for other men, &c.: we are hopelessly in their power, since they hold our land whence alone we might obtain the money to redeem our children. *Luc.*, LXX read, 'the nobles' instead of **other men,** which last the M. T., Ar., Syr., and Vulg. read. The former agrees best with the phraseology of this book and is probably primary. The Hebrew writing of the two words is not very dissimilar.

6–11. *Nehemiah rebukes the guilty ones, and demands both restitution and reform.*

7. nobles, rulers: see on ii. 16.

Ye exact usury: the same verb is used in ver. 10 by Nehemiah to describe what he himself and his brethren and servants did, but here it is accompanied by a cognate accusative which seems to add the idea of lending on interest not (as Rawlinson) upon pledge, which was allowed; see preliminary remarks to this chapter.

assembly: a feminine form of the noun translated 'congregation' in ver. 13 and in Ezra ii. 64 (see on). As there is no difference of meaning, the ending having the force of our indefinite article, the same English word ('congregation') ought to have been employed.

8. have redeemed: lit., 'obtained by purchase,' referring to Jews whom on his arrival he found working off debts in the service of non-Jews.

heathen: lit., 'nations,' a word which in the plural came to have the sense of non-Jewish peoples and to take on an ethical colouring. It is often translated in the English Bible by 'Gentiles' owing to the fact that in the Vulgate *gentes* is the word for the Heb. *goim* (nations), though *gentiles* in Latin denotes strictly members of the aristocratic families; see *SDB.* article 'Nations.'

9 never a word. Also I said, The thing that ye do is not
good: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, be-
10 cause of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? And
I likewise, my brethren and my servants, do lend them
money and corn on usury. I pray you, let us leave off
11 this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day,
their fields, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their
houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the
12 corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. Then
said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing

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9. I said: so rightly *qr.* and all the versions; but the Hebrew consonantal text (*keth*) has 'he said.'

to walk in the fear of our God = to walk, i. e. to conduct oneself as proper respect for the authority of God would dictate; i. e. to keep His commandments; see Acts ix. 31 and cf. Deut. x. 12; see on ver. 15 ('the fear of God').

because of the reproach, &c.: that the reproach which our enemies fasten on us of oppressing each other contrary to the Divine law may cease, or, as many, 'to obviate or prevent such a reproach.'

10. And I . . . do lend: but without interest, see below.

on usury: 'at interest.' Since, however, the Hebrew seems to mean 'to lend without interest' these words are to be omitted.

11. even this day: the Hebrew phrase = 'immediately.'

the hundredth part: read (inserting one Hebrew consonant), 'the interest' (on the money, &c.). One hundredth per cent. per annum would be too small, and so commentators have said that the interest implied was paid monthly (as sometimes in ancient Babylon), making it twelve per cent. per annum, about the average interest charged in Babylon. But nothing in the context or in other parts of the O. T. supports this. It is far simpler with most modern scholars to make the slight change in the text noticed above.

12 f. *The guilty ones promise to make amends for the past and to alter their ways in the future.*

12. We will restore, &c.: this resolution represents probably the result of prolonged negotiations. The historian gives the bare facts only. In any case the enormous influence of the cup-bearer stands out in a clear light.

of them; so will we do, even as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook out 13
my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise. More- 14
over from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not

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the priests administer the oath because it was a religious action; see Num. v. 19–22.

took an oath (of the creditors): the oath occupied a large place among the Hebrews. To violate it was supposed to bring down the Divine malediction. Sometimes the curse implied was explicitly added to increase the solemnity of the act of swearing; see Num. v. 21, and on the next verse.

13. I shook out my lap: i. e. the fold in the bosom of the dress capable of serving the purposes of a pocket.

Nehemiah's symbolical action amounts to a curse upon any one who violated the oath; see Acts xviii. 6 and above on ver. 12; cf. Acts xxiii. 2 'the Jews bound themselves under a curse.'

his labour: the Hebrew word denotes also (as here) the fruits or produce of labour.

be he shaken out: see Job xxxviii. 13.

congregation: see on Ezra ii. 64 and cf. ver. 7 above.

the people: the Jews generally carried into practice what the congregation had approved.

14–19. *Nehemiah's personal generosity and self-denial.*

14. By surrendering the pay to which as governor he was entitled Nehemiah was relieving his fellow countrymen who would have had to be taxed to find it.

twentieth year . . . of Artaxerxes: i. e. 445 B. C. The king was Artaxerxes I; see on ii. 1.

unto the two and thirtieth year: i. e. to 433 B. C., twelve years. See on ii. 6 as to the great length of this period of absence.

my brethren: Nehemiah's retinue.

15 eaten the bread of the governor. But the former governors that were before me [a] were chargeable unto the people, and took of them bread and wine, [b] beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants [c] bare rule over the people: 16 but so did not I, because of the fear of God. Yea, also I [d] continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any

[a] Or, *laid burdens upon* [b] Or, *at the rate of* Or, *afterward*
[c] Or, *lorded over* [d] Heb. *held fast to.*

bread: here, as often in English, food, which is perhaps the primary sense of the Hebrew word. In Arabic the cognate word = 'flesh'; cf. ver. 15 'bread and wine' = the whole of what was served at table.

15. the former governors ... before me: a redundancy, much in the manner of Nehemiah, see v. 13 'shake,' 'be shaken,' and vi. 2. The first of Nehemiah's predecessors in the governorship of the Jewish post-exilic community was Zerubbabel. We know nothing of those intervening, though in the Sachau Papyri, i. 1, we read of a successor Bagohi. It is natural to infer from Nehemiah that as far as he knew Zerubbabel took the full governor's pay.

and took of them, &c.: render, 'for (as the price of, in Hebrew the '*beth* of price') bread and wine daily forty shekels of silver' (about £5).

beside: the Hebrew word (= 'after,' 'afterwards') makes no suitable sense here. Read (with the Vulg.), 'daily,' the form occurring in ver. 18 'for one day' (= 'for each day'). A glance at the Hebrew will show how easily a copyist could mistake one for the other; 'after' and 'one' are written almost alike. The word lost is much like that preceding it, and was probably confounded with it.

bare rule: the Hebrew word itself (the same root as in Sultan, which is Arabic) = 'to exercise power' and so 'to rule.' It may have come to have a bad meaning as 'to lord it,' but we have no other instance of the sense. Perhaps we should read with the Vulg. 'oppressed.'

but so did not I: in Hebrew the pronoun is emphatic, 'but as for me I acted not so.' Compare Paul's similar claim in 1 Cor. ix. 12.

16. I continued, &c.: the Hebrew word is identical with that used for to repair (the wall) (see on iii. 4), but with the preposition following it here (*b*) it = to put the hand to, lay hold of, 'I gave myself whole-heartedly to the work of restoring the wall,' i. e. probably superintending the undertaking as regards actual building, defence, and finance. Nehemiah is not mentioned in ch. iii as undertaking any special portion of the wall.

neither bought we, &c.: he was too absorbed in the main

land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. Moreover there were at my table of the Jews and 17
the [a] rulers an hundred and fifty men, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that were round about us. Now that which was prepared for one day was 18
one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this I demanded not the bread of the governor,

[a] Or, *deputies*

purpose of his visit to have time or inclination for speculating in land. There could, of course, have been no harm in itself in making speculative purchases of land. Perhaps he means that he did not take any advantage of the people's poverty to buy at low prices.

17. According to the M.T. three classes would seem to have been entertained at Nehemiah's tables: (1) Jews; (2) rulers—also Jews; (3) representatives of the Jews whose homes were contiguous to the lands inhabited by the surrounding nations.

It seems to the present writer that the words **the Jews** are simply a gloss from the margin to inform the reader that (in the glosser's opinion) the persons intended by class 3 above were Jews. If the M.T. is kept, it is best, with Bertheau, to explain **the Jews** as generic, the 'and' before the two following classes being explicative, as this conjunction often is in Hebrew (so Greek *καί*), 'The Jews both . . . and.' Van Hoonacker takes **the Jews** to = the poor people (see on ver. 1), and the third class above to denote representatives (emissaries) of the nations around. But this last view is exceedingly improbable, though it is used by the author to support his theory as to the priority of Nehemiah and Ezra. Bertholet makes a clever guess, suggesting that the Hebrew for 'the Jews' is a corruption of the words for 'and it happened daily that.'

the heathen: see on ver. 8.

18. that which was prepared, &c.: see 1 Kings iv. 22 f. Solomon's daily supply.

for one day = 'for each day.'

once in ten days, &c.: by omitting one letter from the Heb. (*b* = 'in' or 'with') the sense conveyed by the E.VV. can be legitimately obtained from the Heb., hardly otherwise. To give the Heb. in separate English words as has been done in order to show that the clause has no meaning is very misleading, as the syntactical relation—quite momentous in Heb.—is lost sight of. The thought is, however, rather strange, a fresh supply of all kinds of wine was brought to the governor's official (?) residence every ten days.

19 because the bondage was heavy upon this people. Remember unto me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people.

6 Now it came to pass, when it was reported to Sanballat and Tobiah, and to Geshem the Arabian, and unto the rest of our enemies, that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though even unto that 2 time I had not set up the doors in the gates;) that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *one of* the villages in the plain of Ono.

the bondage: rather, the work to be done (in connexion with the walls).

19. See xiii. 14, 22, 31, for a similar prayer; cf. ver. 5 and vi. 9, 14. Such naïve prayers abound in oriental and especially in Arabic books. Bertholet (Comm.) cites a similar petition from an Assyrian inscription.

VI. 1–19. Completion of the Walls notwithstanding Opposition from without (1–9) and Treachery within (10–19).

1–4. *Sanballat and his confederates endeavour to entice Nehemiah into the country to kill him.*

1. Sanballat . . . Tobiah: see on ii. 10.

Geshem: see on ii. 19.

the rest, &c.: perhaps the Ashdodites (see iv. 7).

doors in the gates: see on iii. 3. The Heb. translated 'gate' denotes here, as often, 'the gateway structure' with roof (2 Sam. xviii. 24), and upper chamber (2 Sam. xix. 1). The work of inserting the doors had been undertaken (see iii. 3, 6, 14 f.), but it had been found impracticable up to the present to complete this part of the work owing perhaps to the labour and expense involved: see on xiii. 19.

2. Sanballat and Geshem: why not Tobiah also? Probably because he was Sanballat's secretary (see ver. 17). In ver. 1 (M.T., LXX, but not Syr., *Luc.*, and several Heb. MSS.) he is coupled with Sanballat, 'to Sanballat and Tobiah and to Geshem.'

let us meet together: another of Nehemiah's redundancies (see on v. 15; cf. v. 13). See, however, also Job ii. 11.

in *one* of the villages: Heb. 'in the villages,' which is intolerable. Read (with Siegfried, &c.) 'in Hakkepharim' (a place name): cf. the proper name *Kephirah* (='village') in vii. 29 and Ezra ii. 25.

in the plain of Ono: since Ono and Lod (Lydda) are often

But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messen- 3
gers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that
I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst
I leave it, and come down to you? And they sent unto 4
me four times after this sort; and I answered them after
the same manner. Then sent Sanballat his servant unto 5
me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his
hand; wherein was written, It is reported among the 6
nations, and [a] Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think

[a] In ver. 1, and elsewhere, *Geshem*.

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mentioned together as lying in close contiguity (see xi. 35; Ezra ii. 33; 1 Chron. viii. 12) it may be inferred that Hakkepharim was some twenty miles to the north of Jerusalem and about eight to the east of Joppa. At such a distance the Jewish governor could be safely murdered, and in any case the work of rebuilding would be seriously retarded had he been successfully beguiled to such a far-off spot. Nehemiah could not then, had he been allowed to return, have brought the work to a close in less than two months (see on ver. 15).

they thought: Heb. 'purposed.'

to do me mischief: probably to assassinate him or to have him assassinated.

The noun rendered **mischief** occurs in 1 Sam xxiii. 9 (Saul); Esther viii. 13 (Haman).

3. messengers: the usual word for angels (Gen. xlviii. 16, &c.). Here as Deut. ii. 26, of men.

5-9. *Futile attempt to intimidate Nehemiah.*

5. his servant: was this Tobiah his secretary? See ver. 17. There was now in connexion with the open letter a part to play which required skill.

with an open letter: having failed four times with sealed letters intended for Nehemiah's eye alone he made a bid for greater success by sending a letter which was likely to meet the eyes of Nehemiah's ministers—the servant would see to this last. It was hoped that these ministers would accept Sanballat's view of the situation and influence their master. We read in Jer. xxxii. 9-14 of a sealed and unsealed contract, the latter being merely a copy attached to the clay envelope containing the other and exposed for consultation. the seal of the former being broken in cases of dispute only (see Driver, *Jeremiah*, 196 f.).

letter: see on ii. 7.

6. nations: the word translated heathen in v. 8 (see on).

to rebel; for which cause thou buildest the wall: and
thou wouldest be their king, according to these words.
7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee
at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now
shall it be reported to the king according to these words.
Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.
8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things
done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine
9 own heart. For they all would have made us afraid, saying,
Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be
not done. But now, [a] *O God*, strengthen thou my hands.

[a] Or, *I will strengthen my hands*

Here the surrounding nations in league with Sanballat are meant.

Gashmu: see on ii. 19.

think: see on ver. 2.

rebel: see Ezra iv. 13 for a similar charge, made also in connexion with the rebuilding of the walls, showing that this section has nothing to do with the work of Ezra.

thou buildest: better 'rebuildest,' a sign of rebellion. Why these walls if not to defy the power of Persia? Yet they knew better (see ver. 8). The walls were for defence against the people around.

thou wouldest be their king: the participle in Heb. (see v. 3 f.) may mean 'thou wilt soon become king' (as a matter of fact), or 'thou art becoming king,' already on the road to that goal of thine.

7. prophets: there were prophets on Nehemiah's side as well as on the other (see ver. 10 ff.). No prophetic literature of this period seems to have come down to us.

8. thou feignest: Heb. 'thou ventest': lit. (cf. Ar.) 'causest to begin.' The same verb occurs in 1 Kings xii. 33.

heart: in the psychology of the Hebrews the word here (*lēb*) embraces the whole mind, feeling, will, and especially intellect, all supposed to have their physiological counterpart in the heart (see on Ps. cxix. 2, *Century Bible*).

9. But now, &c.: render, 'So now I strengthened my hands.' The Heb. permits and the versions and context support this rendering. The Divine Name is wholly absent from the M.T. The Heb. verb is the infinitive (or imperative?), which is frequently to be rendered by a tense form of the verb.

And I went unto the house of Shemaiah the son of 10
Delaiah the son of Mehetabel, who was shut up; and he
said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within
the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for
they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they
come to slay thee. And I said, Should such a man as I 11
flee? and who is there, that, being such as I, [a] would go
into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. And 12

[a] Or, *could go into the temple and live*

10–14. *False prophets point out the difficulties and dangers of the work.*

10. I went into the house of Shemaiah: why was this done? Many say to obtain an oracle (Urim and Thummim?) for his guidance in a time of perplexity (see Jer. xxxvii. 17, xxxviii. 14). But Nehemiah does not seem to have shown either doubt or fear as to the course he should take (see ver. 3 ff.), and when this man gives his advice Nehemiah spurns it. Why could not Nehemiah visit this man or any other in a mere social way?

Shemaiah: nowhere else mentioned. He was apparently a prophet (see ver. 12) and a priest (see under next word).

Delaiah: the name appears in a list of priestly houses in 1 Chron. xxiv. 18. In the Sachau Papyri (i. 37) one of the two sons of Sanballat is so called.

shut up: probably ceremonially unclean, and therefore disqualified for entering the Temple; under a taboo (see 1 Sam. xxi. 7; 1 Kings xiv. 10; W. Robertson Smith, *Rel. Sem.*(2), 456).

Let us meet together in the house of God: since Shemaiah, though probably a priest, was for the time ceremonially excluded from the cultus, and no layman was allowed to enter the Temple building, the proposal now made involves the violation of two ritual laws. But Shemaiah was prepared to sacrifice religion to tactical considerations. His party was less strict than Nehemiah's in matters of 'the law of Moses.'

(let us) **shut:** the verb usually employed of shutting doors, not that in the word 'shut' noticed above.

the doors of the temple: referring to the two-leaved door (hence the plural) leading from the inner court into the house (1 Kings vi. 33), not the doors between the *haykal* (holy place, and the *debir* (most holy place) (1 Kings vi. 31).

to slay: showing that the idea of slaying him was spoken about.

11. *Nehemiah has too much courage to flee and too much conscience to violate the sanctity of the house of God.*

to save his life: in accordance with the primitive law of

I discerned, and, lo, God had not sent him: but he pronounced this prophecy against me: and Tobiah and
13 Sanballat had hired him. For this cause was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might
14 reproach me. Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and also the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day* of
16 *the month* Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to

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asylum connected with sanctuaries and altars. See Exod. xxi. 13; 1 Kings i. 50 f., ii. 28 (see note on former in *Century Bible*, J. Skinner); Mic. x. 53; W. R. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*(2), 138, 436; cf. Exod. xxix. 12; Lev. iv. 7 ff.

Nehemiah will not break what he regarded as a Divine law for the sake of saving his own life.

to save his life: lit. 'that he may live.'

12. I discerned: he could see behind appearances (cf. 2 Sam. iii. 36) that this man was inspired by the prospect of cash and not by any Divine impulse (see Jer. xxiii. 21, 32; Ezek. xiii. 2; and cf. Num. xvi. 28 and Jer. xxix. 19).

13. For this cause was he hired: the Heb. words so translated are no doubt a dittograph of the last clause of ver. 12 slightly changed, and must (with *Luc.*, Siegfried, &c.) be omitted. The English translation is here, as often, so well done as to largely hide the defects of the Heb.

14. Remember: for evil here, as in xiii. 29; cf. v. 19, xiii. 22, 31 ('remember for good').

Noadiah (='one who meets Yah'): nowhere else mentioned. For other prophetesses cf. Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Hannah.

15 f. *The work completed.*

15. Elul: the sixth month (August-September), the eleventh in the secular year as now observed (see on Ezra x. 17). It is not named in the O.T. except here, though it is mentioned in 1 Macc. xiv. 27.

fifty and two days: this may seem a very short interval of time for so great a task to be accomplished, but there are many considerations which make for the account here given. (1) It must have been a condition of Nehemiah's leave of absence that he

pass, when all our enemies heard *thereof*, that all the heathen that were about us [a] feared, and were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God. Moreover in those days the 17
nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and *the letters* of Tobiah came unto them. For there were 18
many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shecaniah the son of Arah; and his son

[a] According to another reading, *saw*.

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should expedite the work as much as possible. That he remained away twelve years was due to difficulties in reform and reorganization which could not be foreseen (see on ii. 6). (2) v. 16 gives the impression of great haste in the work. (3) The walls had not to be built but only rebuilt, and there are indications in ch. iii that large parts needed little or no repairing (see ver. 13, &c.). (4) It is exceedingly probable that others before Nehemiah had set about the restoration of the walls, though they were hindered and their work to some extent undone (see p. 160, BETWEEN EZRA and NEHEMIAH). (5) The materials for the building were for the most part ready to hand, for the old stones could be used for the new wall or parts of the wall.

According to Josephus (*Antiq.*, v. 7, 8) the builders took two years and four months for the work. Ewald following him in this would in the present verse insert 'two years,' reading therefore 'two years and fifty-two days,' which would, however, be less than the time given by Josephus to the extent of some two months. All the versions are in favour of the M.T., from which there are no good reasons for departing.

16. were much cast down: lit. 'fell very much,' an unique expression, though intelligible. It is better to make a small change in one word and to read (with Klostermann) 'and it was very wonderful in their eyes.'

this work was wrought of our God: a thought constantly in the mind of Nehemiah (see i. 5 f., &c.); cf. Ps. cxviii. 23, cxxvi. 2 f.

17–19. *Jewish noblemen conspire with Tobiah.*

17. nobles: see on ii. 16.

letters: see on ii. 7.

18. sworn unto him: upon his marrying into a Jewish family there would be on both sides an undertaking by oath, he to be loyal to his new people, they to be true to their new initiate.

Arah: see vii. 10; Ezra ii. 5.

Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the
19 son of Berechiah to wife. Also they spake of his good
deeds before me, and reported my words to him. *And*
Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

7 Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I
had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers
2 and the Levites were appointed, that I gave my brother
Hanani, and Hananiah the governor of the castle, charge
over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared

Meshullam: see on iii. 4, 30.

had taken . . . to wife: see on ii. 10. In the East slaves not seldom rise to high positions and make grand marriages; cf. the Mameluke dynasties of Egypt. Some of the finest Arab poets were at first slaves.

19. Render, 'And they spake before me with regard to his words, and reported to him my words.'

his good deeds: Heb. 'his good' (qualities, words, deeds?), a mere adjective in the feminine (= neuter); read 'his words': so LXX; cf. Syr., 'my good words' and parallelism.

VII. 1–73[a] + XI. 1 ff.

Measures taken for the Defence of the City and the Increase of its Population.

1–3. *Provisions for the defence of the city.*

1. doors: see on iii. 3 and vi. 1.

porters: better 'gate-keepers,' the word being a denominative from the noun = 'gate' (see on Ezra ii. 42).

singers . . . Levites: probably an early addition to the text, so early that all the versions vouch for it. What had these Temple officials to do with the city gates? The older and many modern commentators say that Nehemiah appointed them to share the responsibility of guarding the gates because they could, above most Jerusalemites (cf. vi. 17–19), be trusted.

2. Hanani: see on i. 2: as a well-tried brother he could trust him as he could also **Hananiah**, the governor of the citadel or castle (see on ii. 8), who was really general of the city forces, perhaps a Persian official, though (cf. name) a Jew by nationality.

he was a faithful man: referring to Hananiah. His own brother's loyalty was too well known to need chronicling. Nehemiah did well for his cause in placing two men so trustworthy in general charge of Jerusalem.

God above many. And I said unto them, Let not the 3
gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and
while they stand *on guard*, let them shut the doors,
and bar ye them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants
of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be*

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3. I said: correcting rightly (with all the ancient versions) the Heb. consonantal text, 'he said.'

until the sun be hot: until the sun has fully risen, perhaps no more is meant. The gates of Eastern cities are opened as soon as the sun rises. Is the phrase in the text intended to prevent a confusion between the sunshine and moonshine?

and while they (the porters) **stand**: the words ***on guard*** are inserted by our translators to supply the deficiencies of the M. T. The Heb. is in other respects peculiar and even inaccurate. It is better to make some changes in the text (see Bertholet) and to render, 'And while the sun is hot (= before sunset) let the doors be shut and barred.'

let them shut . . . bar ye them: both verbs are passive in the versions, and by a well-known idiom ('indefinite subject') the Heb. can be so rendered, making, however, a slight change in the second verb.

shut: the Heb. verb is found nowhere else in the O.T., though in the Talmud it has in the same form (*Hiph*) the same meaning.

bar ye: read passive third pers. 'let them bar' = 'let (them) be barred' (see before). The verb = 'to lay hands on,' 'seize,' but seems in 1 Kings vi. 10 to mean as here to 'apply the bars to.'

appoint: the verb is infinitive absolute, used as a strong imperative—so often. No textual change is therefore necessary. The persons addressed are Hanani and Hananiah.

watches: divisions of the night for the purpose of watching. Before the exile and for long afterwards the Hebrews had (as the Greeks and Babylonians) three watches of four hours each. In our Lord's day and for some time (how long?) before there were four (see Mark xiii. 35 and cf. Matt. xiv. 25; Mark vi. 48). See on Ps. xc. 4 and cxix. 148 (*Century Bible*).

These two men were to set up (lit. 'make to stand'), i. e. probably restore, a system of night-watches for (all) Jerusalem men, whereby each was to take his turn, and in doing so to stand sentinel in front of his own house. How all this was arranged is a matter of detail about which the surviving writings of the annalist tell us nothing, but there can be no doubt it would be seen to that no extensive portion of the city was at any time without its watchman. There was certainly but one set of watchmen, not many, as some (Bertheau, &c.) have thought, for no difference of functions is implied.

4 over against his house. Now the city was wide and large:
but the people were few therein, and the houses were
5 not builded. And my God put into my heart to gather
together the nobles, and the [a] rulers, and the people, that
they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found the

[a] Or, *deputies*

4–73[a] + xi. 1 ff. *Measures for increasing the population of Jerusalem.*

4. (the city was) **wide**: Heb. 'wide on both hands,' the literal sense of the phrase in Ps. civ. 25. The words take on, however, as here, the meaning of extending far in all directions (see Gen. xxxiv. 2, &c.).

houses were not builded: how, then, could the inhabitants when watching stand before them? The verb rendered 'builded' means 'rebuilt,' and even 'repair,' as in ch. iii. The wall is said to be rebuilt, though much of it was perfect. So here we are probably to understand that the work of restoring the houses in a general way had not been undertaken for lack of a sufficient population, for the houses taken would be set right each by its occupants. The surmise of Paul Haupt that 'houses' refers to the families which had not been reorganized is too fanciful, though favoured by the following verses and not opposed to usage as regards the word 'house.'

5. my God put into my heart, &c.: see ii. 12 and Ezra vii. 27.

nobles . . . rulers: see on ii. 16.

people: see on v. 1, 17.

that they might be reckoned by genealogy = that they might be allocated each to his tribe, clan, and family: see on Ezra ii. 62.

Most scholars agree that the purpose for which the register of families, &c., was now called for and supplied was with a view to the repeopling of Jerusalem. A proportion of the country population would have to be transferred to the capital, but only such as were pure-blooded Jews (see xi. 1 ff.). In order to be able to prove the possession of this qualification a genealogical register was necessary, and was found where the author of Ezra ii found his—in fact, it is the same list. This interpretation assumed an immediate connexion between ver. 73[a] and xi. 1, the section 73[b]–x being regarded as an extract from the biography of Ezra which has accidentally or otherwise got away from its right place. There is not a word in this chapter indicating explicitly the *raison d'être* of this list at this time, but the explanation given above is at least a reasonable one. See further on xi.

I found the book of the genealogy, &c: where? perhaps in the Temple archives: see Introduction to Ezra ii.

book of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and I found written therein : [T_R] [a]These are the children 6
of the province, that went up out of the captivity of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and that returned unto Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city ; who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, 7
Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel : the children of Parosh, two thou- 8
sand an hundred and seventy and two. The children of 9
Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. The child- 10
ren of Arah, six hundred fifty and two. The children of 11
Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred *and* eighteen. The children 12
of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. The 13
children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five. The 14
children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. The children of Binnui, six hundred forty and eight. The 15, 16
children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight. The child- 17
ren of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two. The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore 18
and seven. The children of Bigvai, two thousand three- 19
score and seven. The children of Adin, six hundred fifty 20
and five. The children of Ater, of Hezekiah, ninety and 21
eight. The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty 22
and eight. The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty 23
and four. The children of Hariph, an hundred and 24
twelve. The children of Gibeon, ninety and five. The 25, 26
men of Bethlehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore

[a] See Ezra ii. 1, &c.

6–73[a]. *List of those who returned.* As this list is practically identical with that in Ezra ii the reader must for lack of space be referred to the general and detailed remarks on that chapter.

27 and eight. The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and
28, 29 eight. The men of Beth-azmaveth, forty and two. The
men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven
30 hundred forty and three. The men of Ramah and Geba,
31 six hundred twenty and one. The men of Michmas, an
32 hundred and twenty and two. The men of Beth-el and
33 Ai, an hundred twenty and three. The men of the other
34 Nebo, fifty and two. The children of the other Elam,
35 a thousand two hundred fifty and four. The children
36 of Harim, three hundred and twenty. The children of
37 Jericho, three hundred forty and five. The children
of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and
38 one. The children of Senaah, three thousand nine
39 hundred and thirty. The priests: the children of Jedaiah,
of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.
40, 41 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. The
children of Pashhur, a thousand two hundred forty and
42 seven. The children of Harim, a thousand *and* seven-
43 teen. The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel,
44 of the children of [a] Hodevah, seventy and four. The
singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and
45 eight. The porters: the children of Shallum, the child-
ren of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of
Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai,
46 an hundred thirty and eight. The Nethinim: the child-
ren of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of
47 Tabbaoth; the children of Keros, the children of Sia,
48 the children of Padon; the children of Lebana, the child-
49 ren of Hagaba, the children of Salmai; the children
of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar;
50 the children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the child-
51 ren of Nekoda; the children of Gazzam, the children of

[a] Another reading is, *Hodeiah*.

Uzza, the children of Paseah; the children of Besai, 52
the children of Meunim, the children of [a] Nephushesim;
the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the 53
children of Harhur; the children of Bazlith, the child- 54
ren of Mehida, the children of Harsha; the children of 55
Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Temah;
the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha. The 56, 57
children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai,
the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida; the 58
children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of
Giddel; the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, 59
the children of Pocherethhazzebaim, the children of
Amon. All the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's 60
servants, were three hundred ninety and two. And these 61
were they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha,
Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew
their fathers' houses, nor their seed, whether they were of
Israel: the children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, 62
the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two. And 63
of the priests: the children of Hobaiah, the children of
Hakkoz, the children of Barzillai, which took a wife of
the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called
after their name. These sought their register *among* those 64
that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found:
therefore [b] were they deemed polluted and put from the
priesthood. And the [c] Tirshatha said unto them, that 65
they should not eat of the most holy things, till there
stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim. The whole 66
congregation together was forty and two thousand three
hundred and threescore, beside their menservants and 67
their maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand

[a] Another reading is, *Nephishesim.*
[b] Heb. *they were polluted from the priesthood.* [c] Or. *governor*

three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hun-
68 dred forty and five singing men and singing women. Their
horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their mules,
69 two hundred forty and five; *their* camels, four hun-
dred thirty and five; *their* asses, six thousand seven
70 hundred and twenty. And some from among the heads
of fathers' *houses* gave unto the work. The Tirshatha
gave to the treasury a thousand darics of gold, fifty basons,
71 five hundred and thirty priests' garments. And some of
the heads of fathers' *houses* gave into the treasury of the
work twenty thousand darics of gold, and two thousand
72 and two hundred [a] pound of silver. And that which the
rest of the people gave was twenty thousand darics of gold,
and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and
73 seven priests' garments. So the priests, and the Levites,
and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people,
and the Nethinim, [C_E] and all Israel, dwelt in their cities.
[b] And when the seventh month was come, the child-

[a] Heb. *maneh.* [b] See Ezra iii. 1.

THE REFORMS OF EZRA, CONTINUING THE HISTORY OF EZRA X.

vii. 73[b]–viii. 12 (= 1 Esd. ix. 37–55). *The public reading of the law and its effect on the people.* This section forms a natural sequel to Ezra x: see Introduction to Ezra ix. f.

vii. 73[b]–viii. 8. *The reading and expounding of the law.*

vii. 73[b] and viii. 1 have so much in common with Ezra iii. 1 that some connexion seems likely, especially as in both cases a genealogical register precedes. The resemblances are probably due to the fact that the writer of the present paragraph had the other before him. vii. 73[b] might well be an interpolation, though it has the support of all the versions.

73[b]. the seventh month: i. e. Tishri (see on Ezra iii. 1). What year is meant we are not told, but the inquiry regarding the mixed marriages was brought to an end in the tenth month of 457 B. C. (see Ezra x. 17 and the context), the putting away of the strange wives occurring on the first day of the following year. i. e. Nisan 1, 456. It seems likely that the 'seventh month' of the present verse belongs to the year last named. The coinci-

ren of Israel were in their cities. And all the people 8
gathered themselves together as one man into the broad
place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto
Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses,
which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the 2

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dence of popular assemblies meeting in Tishri at widely separated periods (Ezra iii. 1 and here) need occasion no surprise, since in it the most important festivals were held—Atonement, Tabernacles, &c. Besides, originally, as now, this month began the new year, and this might well suggest a new start in life, made more possible by having the law of their life made known to the people.

1. **broad place**: see on iii. 26 and Ezra x. 9.

water gate: see on iii. 26.

and they spake . . . to bring: the Hebrew means 'they gave orders . . . that he should bring,' the Hebrew as in Esther i. 17 (R.V. 'commanded') and iv. 13 (R.V. 'bade'). Since Ezra had brought with him a copy of the law (Ezra vii. 25), it has been ever regarded as surprising that he should have so long withheld it, and hence Winckler joins the present chapter immediately to Ezra viii, though the evidently close connexion between Ezra viii and ix makes this supposition an impossible one: see p. 133 f.

(Ezra) **the scribe**: read with 1 Esdras 'the priest and scribe' (see verses 2, 4, 9).

the book of the law of Moses: called in ver. 2 'the law,' and in ver. 5 'the book,' the former indicating its contents and the latter its form (the Hebrew rendered 'book' means in the O. T. 'roll,' though there is also for the latter a distinct word). The Hebrew *torah*, translated 'law,' means strictly 'teaching,' 'instruction.' In Ps. lxxviii. 1 'my law' is parallel to 'the words of my mouth.' It came to denote especially the Divine will as revealed through prophets and priests, and hence soon acquired the sense 'law.' In post-biblical Hebrew it is the technical term for the Pentateuch, but it never has that meaning in the O. T. The law which Ezra brought and published was much smaller in its scope than the 'Five Books,' and did not contain the whole of the Priestly Code, though largely coinciding with it. The early religious laws of the Hebrews came soon to be connected with the name of Moses, the traditional legislator of the nation, just as the religious songs were at an early time ascribed to the David of Chronicles, David the organizer of the Temple Psalmody. See for a fuller discussion of the nature and extent of Ezra's law, p. 8 ff.

priest brought the law before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding,
3 upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate [a] from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were *attentive* unto

[a] Heb. *from the light.*

2. congregation: see on Ezra ii. 64.

The old tradition that Ezra established and presided over an institution called the Great Synagogue, which in the interval between the prophets and the scribes superintended Jewish affairs, arose out of the *ad hoc* assemblies described in Neh. viii-x, and has not a vestige of support in the O. T., though it is implied in the Mishna (*Pirqe Abot*, 1). Elias Levita (d. 1549) started the view, afterwards so generally held, that the O. T. Canon was fixed by this council with Ezra at its head, though it is now quite certain that many parts of the O. T. were not even written until centuries later. It is strange to find a modern Jewish scholar like Dr. Schechter [1] adhering still to this tradition, though its absurdity has been proved by Kuenen (see his Collected Essays, edited and put into German by Budde, p. 125 ff.): cf. W. Robertson Smith, *OTJC.*(2), 169 f. (n.).

and all that could hear with understanding: better (so Heb.) 'all that understood as they heard.' Of course children are meant (see x. 28 (29)). The Hebrew verb, which = 'to understand,' has also the causative sense 'to cause to understand,' as in verses 7, 9, &c. (see on Ezra viii. 16). This is according to a usage well known to Hebrew and Arabic scholars ('Inner Hiphil').

the first day of the seventh month: a great day among the Jews (see Lev. xxiii. 23–25; Num. xxix. 1–6, post-exilic passages). From the time of Alexander the Great Jews have kept this day as their New Year day. In Nehemiah's day the importance attached to the day seems a survival of early usage, for it was in Nisan that the year began in the centuries immediately following the exile. See on Ezra x. 17.

3. from early morning: Heb. (not as in the R.Vm. 'but') 'from the time it began to be light.'

until midday, when the excessive heat made further standing in the open impracticable. Most Orientals have about this time of the day a long siesta.

[1] See *Studies in Judaism*, 2nd series, pp. 67 and 105 f.

the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a 4
[a] pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose;
and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah,
and Uriah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand;
and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchi-
jah, and Hashum, and Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, *and*

[a] Heb. *tower.*

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4. (Ezra) **the scribe**: read (with 1 Esdras) 'the priest and scribe,' as in ver. 1 (see on).

pulpit: the Hebrew word is the ordinary one for 'tower,' but means literally 'what is high.' Here one may think of a wooden platform capable of holding over a dozen (or over fourteen) men. A pulpit in the modern sense is of course out of the question, and for that reason the use of the word is misleading and unfortunate.

(made) **for the purpose**: Syr., *Luc.*, and Vulg. (varying the Hebrew vowels) read 'to speak' (on). The LXX omits the clause.

and beside him, &c.: the number of men (Levites?) on Ezra's right and left hand respectively differ in the various authorities as follows: M.T. and Syr., six and seven; the LXX (best MSS.), six and four; *Luc.*, seven and seven; Vulg., six and six; 1 Esdras, seven and six. As a copyist is more likely to omit than to insert, *Luc.* (seven on both hands) is more likely to represent the original text, though the number twelve (six on each side) would correspond to the number of tribes, and is therefore often preferred. Apart from omission in the smaller lists, the names are in the main identical. The names here mentioned seem, as Bertheau points out, to stand for individuals and not, as in the names in iii, in ver. 7 and in ix. 4, x. 9, the names of clans or families.

Who were these fourteen (or twelve?) men? Probably priests, though not (as Rawlinson) 'chief priests of the course which was at the time performing the temple service.' Some of the names in this list appear in x. 2–9 as priests, as Malchiah, Meshullam, and perhaps Maaseiah (? = Maaziah), though in the latter the names stand for clans or houses. The law now made public by Ezra had been gradually evolved within the priestly circle before, during, and after the exile, and as in it the rights and privileges of the priests were safeguarded, one would expect to see Ezra supported by the priesthood on so memorable an occasion as this. Why, however, do we not read of the attendance and support of the high-priest, who in the new community had been accorded so favoured a place? Perhaps envy of Ezra's assumed position kept this official away, not, surely, opposition to

5 Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of
all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and
6 when he opened it, all the people stood up: and
Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the
people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of
their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped
7 the LORD with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua,
and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai,
Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan,
Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand

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the publication of the law up to now esoteric in the priesthood, for its publication could not but promote the prestige and power of the high-priesthood.

5. opened the book = unrolled the parchment roll: see Luke iv. 17. Bound books in the modern sense were not known until A. D. 300. Even then the writing material was parchment or vellum.

all the people stood up: according to Rabbinical tradition it was the custom from the time of Moses onwards for the people to stand while the law was being read. Standing was a mark of respect: see Judges iii. 20 and perhaps Job xxxvii. 14. Herzfeld quotes the latter passage for his rendering here 'stood still.'

6. and Ezra blessed, &c.: in the modern synagogue prayers are offered when the law is taken from its keeping-place (the *haykal*) and when it is returned. See the Jewish Prayer Book, Sabbath morning service.

Amen: lit. 'firm,' 'established'; then as adverb 'certainly,' 'assuredly.' See v. 13; Deut. xxvii. 14 ff.; 1 Kings i. 36; Jer. xi. 5, xxviii. 6, all pre-exilic passages except the first, showing that the word was in use before the exile. Its liturgical use meets us in post-exilic writings only, as in Num. v. 22; 1 Chron. xvi. 36; Ps. cvi. 48, &c., though one cannot therefore say positively that this latter use was unknown in pre-exilic times.

with the lifting up of their hands: see on Ezra ix. 5.

7. Jeshua, &c.: of the thirteen names seven are mentioned as Levites elsewhere (see ix. 5 and x. 9–14). The LXX has the three first names only, the Vulgate agreeing with the M. T., and the Syr. having a smaller number—eleven. The names all stand for the families so called (cf. Jeshua), though of course they were originally personal.

and (the Levites): omit with Vulg. and 1 Esdras. If retained it is the explicative 'and' (= 'even').

the law: and the people *stood* in their place. And they 8
read in the book, in the law of God, [a] distinctly; and
they gave the sense, [b] so that they understood the reading.
And Nehemiah, which was the Tirshatha, and Ezra the 9

[a] Or, *with an interpretation* [b] Or, *and caused* them *to understand*

and the people *stood* in their place: the word italicized occurs in 2 Chron. xxx. 16, and has perhaps to be restored here: see Neh. ix. 3, where a verb of similar import occurs. The sense is 'the people stood in the place set apart for them.'

8. Render, 'And they read in the book of the law of God, uttering the words distinctly and giving the sense (of the words) and the (connected) meaning at the (= each) section.'

they read: perhaps Ezra read the section (*perashah*), the Levites reading the prepared interpretation.

in the law: omit one letter repeated by mistake and read 'of the law.'

distinctly: see on Ezra iv. 18. The form of the word has to be altered so as to assimilate it with the verbal form following, both being then infinitive absolutes used gerundially: see the translation above. A noun cognate with the verbal form occurs in Esther iv. 7 ('exact sum') and x. 2 ('full account').

(gave) **the sense:** i. e. the meaning of the words.

so that they understood: make a slight change in the Hebrew and thus get a noun parallel to that translated 'sense.' The word thus obtained implies a deeper knowledge, one involving a perception of the relation of the separate things considered. The same two words are also in parallelism in 1 Chron. xxii. 12; 2 Chron. ii. 11. It is obviously a mistake to make the writer mean that as the people were ignorant of Hebrew the original text had to be turned into Aramaic. The Jews had not lost their knowledge of Hebrew in the exile, as the writings of Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c., show.

the reading: we should probably render 'at the (= each) section,' a common meaning of the word in Rabbinical Hebrew.

9–12. *Ezra commands the people to rejoice and not to weep.*

9. Nehemiah . . . the Tirshatha: this whole clause is certainly to be omitted, as is suggested by the isolated mention of Nehemiah here, as in x. 2, and by the varied forms taken by the clause in the Versions. If this leader were on the scene at this time he could not have played a great part in the reforms now going forward. In 1 Esdras we have simply 'Attharates,' which, as 1 Esd. v. 40 shows, is given as a proper name. In the Syr. 'Nehemiah the high-priest' is the phrase, whereas in the LXX it is simply 'Nehemiah.' *Luc.* and the Vulg. agree with the M.T.

priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept,
10 when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved;
11 for the joy of the LORD is your [a] strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the

[a] Or, *strong hold*

Tirshatha: see on Ezra ii. 63, where this epithet (not an official title) is applied to Zerubbabel. Nehemiah is never so described; he is called 'Governor' (*pekhah*): see on Ezra viii. 36.

(Ezra) **the priest the scribe**: see verses 1, 4.

the Levites that taught: see on Ezra viii. 16. This was their function; Ezra seems to have only read the portion to be explained: see on ver. 8.

This day is holy: see on ver. 1. It was the new moon of the seventh month.

mourn not, &c.: note how in an earlier age the introduction of the Deuteronomic law was followed by weeping, as the publication of Ezra's law is now (see 2 Kings xxii. 11, 19). The people saw their sins in a new light when the standard of perfect conduct was brought before them. But festal days were intended to be times of rejoicing (see next verse).

10. he (said): i. e. Ezra: see on ver. 9.

eat the fat, and drink the sweet: i. e. eat and drink the best you can get; do not fast in any degree, it is high festival time.

send portions: all festivals among the Semites were seasons of social conviviality, to which the sojourner, orphan, widow, &c., were to be invited (Deut. xvi. 11, 14). Portions of what was offered were sent to those who could not join the company, the poor, &c. (Esther ix. 19, 22): see G. B. Gray on Num. xxii. 40. The word rendered 'portions' means perhaps 'choice bits': see on Esther ii. 9.

the joy of the LORD (= Yahweh): objective genitive, 'the joy you have or take in Yahweh.' See Ps. ix. 3, xxxii. 11.

your strength: Heb. 'your safe retreat,' 'refuge,' not, as in the R.Vm., 'stronghold,' though the Massorites so explained the word.

11. Hold your peace: i. e. Do not weep aloud (see ver. 9)

day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people 12
went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions,
and to make great mirth, because they had understood the
words that were declared unto them.

And on the second day were gathered together the 13
heads of fathers' *houses* of all the people, the priests,
and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to give atten-
tion to the words of the law. And they found written in 14

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the day is holy: i. e. set apart for Yahweh; whatever has to do with Him should give joy.

12. portions: see on ver. 10.

13–18. *Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, as prescribed by the newly found law.*

It is the month Tishri (see on ver. 1). The law book had been made known. In this month the Feast of Tabernacles fell (15 to 21 or to 22), and the newly instructed people, led by their specially instructed leaders, set about the keeping of this festival. It is now the second day, and thirteen days more must come and go before 'the Feast' (see on ver. 18) will begin. The tenth day of the month is that prescribed in the Priestly Code for what became the most solemn fast of the Jewish code (see Exod. xxix. 36, xxx. 10; Lev. xxiii. 27 f., xxv. 9). Yet nothing is said about this fast, the Day of Atonement, proof enough surely that the laws enacting it formed no part of Ezra's *torah*.

13. heads of fathers' *houses* . . . priests and the Levites: Ezra now instructs an inner circle in his law as he had previously the whole congregation. His purpose would be to supply the leaders with information about points too recondite for the multitude, and also perhaps to give directions as to the carrying out of the law.

heads of fathers' houses: see on Ezra ii. 59.

even: omit with the versions (LXX, *Luc.*, Syr., Vulg.).

to give attention to: better, 'that he might give the sense of the (different) parts of the law.' The Heb. verb here is cognate with the noun rendered 'sense' in ver. 8, and means often to 'teach,' as in ix. 20, Ps. xxxii. 8, &c., i. e. 'to give the sense of.'

the words of: the Heb. term denotes 'things' as well as 'words,' and is often used as here in the sense of details, minutiae (see Jer. v. 21; Ps. lxv. 4, cxxxvii. 2, cxlv. 5). Ezra had to explain to this select company the detailed points and especially the hard ones of the law.

14. The laws concerning the Feast of Tabernacles occur in all the principal Hexateuch codes in different forms corresponding to

the law, how that the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the
15 feast of the seventh month: and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and branches of wild olive, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths,
16 as it is written. So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the

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different stages of belief and practice (see Exod. xxiii. 16 (JE); Deut. xvi. 13, 16; Lev. xxiii. 39–43 (H); and Lev. xxiii. 34–36 (P); Ezek. xlv. 25). The statements in verses 14–18 of the present chapter show that the writer had before him the third of the above sections alone (Lev. xxiii. 39–43) which belongs to the Holiness Code (Lev. xvii–xxvi). Moreover the words given as written in the law differ in detail from those of the section used, showing that small importance was attached to the mere words of the law.

by Moses: cf. ver 1 ('the law of Moses'). The very old tradition as to the Mosaic origin of the law and the later one as to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch is so far correct that Moses must have laid down the general lines of a legal code which continued to be modified and expanded down to the fourth century B. C.: see p. 10 f.

that the children of Israel should dwell in booths: nowhere else in the O. T. is this prescribed except in Lev. xxiii. 42.

15. that they should publish: cf. Lev. xxiii. 1, 4.

the mount: here as often = the mountain land, i. e. Judah.

fetch olive branches . . . to make booths: there is nothing in Lev. xxiii saying that the branches, &c., to be gathered were to be used in constructing booths, though (so Keil, Dillmann, &c.) that may be intended. All that is commanded is that the people were to take the fruit of goodly trees, 'branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees (= myrtles according to tradition), and willows of the brook' (Lev. xxiii. 40). With these they were to keep the feast (ver. 41). Then it is said they were to dwell in booths, without any hint as to how these were to be made. Perhaps (so Kuenen) the branches, &c., in ver. 40 were to be used also in forming the bundles (*lulabs*) of four kinds (myrtles, &c.) which, since early times, have been brandished during the feast in the synagogues. Of this latter custom the Bible gives no explicit account, though it may be implied in the above verse of Leviticus.

as it is written: see on ver. 14.

roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the broad place of the water gate, and in the broad place of the gate of Ephraim. And 17
all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and dwelt in the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was

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16. the roof of his house: flat in Palestine and much used as places of resort of evenings (see 2 Sam. xi. 2; Dan. iv. 26), and for even sleeping on in summer. During the feast the Jews still take their meals in the booths as far as weather, means, &c., permit.

courts: most Palestine houses have open courts with wells of water on which the inmates depend for their supply.

the broad place of the water gate: see on iii. 26, and on Ezra x. 9.

the gate of Ephraim: see on iii. 6 and xii. 39; cf. 2 Kings xiv. 13; 2 Chron. xxv. 23. It was a little to the south-west of the corner, and (according to G. A. Smith) south of the line of wall repaired under Nehemiah.

17. all the congregation of them, &c.: render according to the Heb., 'All the congregation, (even) those who returned,' &c. The word in brackets is inserted to make the sense clear, but in Heb. the whole congregation is equated with those who returned. The unexiled Jews whom the returned exiles found in the home-land were relatively so few and unimportant as to be ignored. See on Ezra vi. 21.

since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun, &c.: yet we read in Ezra iii. 4 of a celebration of the feast almost immediately after the arrival of Zerubbabel. There are several ways of reconciling what upon the surface and without prejudice looks like a contradiction. J. D. Mich., Klost., and Sieg. omit **the son of Nun,** identifying this Jeshua then with the well-known high-priest who shared in the observance of Ezra iii. 4. All the versions, however, have these words, and moreover the whole clause seems based on 2 Kings xxiii. 22. Jeshua bin-Nun was the inaugurator of a new era just as was Jeshua the companion of Zerubbabel, and was not unlikely to be mentioned.

Others (Bertheau, &c.) lay great stress on the word **so,** taking the clause to mean that in *such a manner* the Israelites had not observed this feast from the time of Jeshua bin-Nun. The present writer thinks that the Heb. words 'had not done so' mean simply 'had not kept the Feast, had not done what had been described'—the celebration of this Feast. It is better to see in the two ac-

18 very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day
unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God.
And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day
was a [a] solemn assembly, according unto the ordinance.
9 Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the

[a] Or, *closing festival*

counts two different and conflicting traditions handed down along different channels. The writer of either of these passages had evidently not seen the other passage. Differences and even contradictions like these make the record of facts and traditions in Ezra-Nehemiah the more valuable and trustworthy.

gladness: see Lev. xxiii. 40.

18. seven days: so Lev. xxiii. 39; Deut. xvi. 13, 15.

a solemn assembly: this is no part of the Feast proper, as the words of this verse imply and as is shown by Num. xxix. 35 (P), where the sacrifices for the day bear no proportion to those offered daily during the seven days of Tabernacles. See G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, 402 ff. ('A scale of public offerings'). This eighth day is mentioned in Lev. xxiii. 34, 39 (P not H); Num. xxix. 35 (late P), but not in Deut. (see xvi. 13–15, xxxi. 9–12), nor in JE. See 1 Kings viii. 65 f. (where the older law is implied) and 2 Chron. vii. 8–10 (which follows P). Opinion is divided as to whether the last great day of the Feast of John vii. 37 is the last (i. e. the seventh day) of the Feast proper or the eighth day, the solemn assembly. But there can be no doubt that it is the seventh day that is meant.

IX.

The contents of this chapter follow quite naturally upon those of that which precedes. When the people through the reading of the law come to a perception of the wide divergence between their lives and the acknowledged standard one might expect to see the demonstrations of grief described in ch. ix. It is of course assumed that the mourning and weeping of viii. 9–11 and of the present chapter are on account of the mixed marriages which the reading of the law had painted in the darkest colours. During the feasts of the seventh month the mourning people are commended to rejoice in accordance with the custom and requirements of the festival times (viii. 9 ff.). But the feast of the month is past and gone (Tabernacles) and the mourning is resumed two days later (see ver. 1).

1–5. *Day of public confession.*

1. the twenty and fourth day (of Tishri): this would be two days after the Feast of Tabernacles had come to a close. This verse shows that chaps. viii and ix are inseparably connected.

children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackcloth, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel 2
separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book 3
of the law of the LORD their God a fourth part of the

This day is not (with Siegfried) to be identified with the Day of Atonement (see Lev. xvi, xxii. 27–32; Num. xx. 7 ff.), which in later times was observed on the tenth day of the month, but which in Ezra's time was unknown.

fasting: see Ezra viii. 21, x. 6.

sackcloth: a sign of penitent sorrow (see 1 Chron. xxi. 16; Jonah iii. 5, 8; Dan. ix. 3): see on Esther iv. 1.

earth upon them: see 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2, xv. 32; Job ii. 12.

2. the seed: a comparison with Ezra ix. 2 suggests common authorship. In favour of authorship by Ezra is also the fact that the word is found most frequently in writing about the time of the exile (see Isa. xlv. 25; cf. ver. 19; Jer. xxxi. 36, &c.).

separated themselves: i. e. for the united act of confession and prayer. Keil and others think that a general separation from the heathen is meant.

strangers, i.e. non-Jews: another Heb. word (*gēr*), generally translated 'sojourners,' means non-Jews who have settled in Jewish territory and adopted largely, and in late times wholly, the religion of the Jews. Notwithstanding what is recorded in Ezra ix f. it seems evident that non-Jews joined Jews in the religious assemblies of the latter: see on Ezra iii. 3, x. 2, and article 'Stranger' in *SDB.*

the iniquities of their fathers: see remarks on verses 7–31.

3. they stood up in their place: render, 'they arose (so the Heb.) and went to their place,' i. e. the place appointed for them (see on viii. 7).

and read: who? Not the people, though the Heb. allows this. We have here an example of the unnamed ('indefinite') subject' so common in Hebrew which is better rendered into English by the passive, as it is the action and not the agent that is in question: see p. 103. Here the Levites must be understood as the readers (see viii. 3–8).

book of the law, &c.: see on viii. 1; cf. verses 4, 5, 7 of the present chapter and x. 29, 34.

a fourth part of the day: i. e. three hours, probably from about 9 a.m. to 12 noon, the other three hours following immediately upon this. The whole assembly must have stood throughout the six hours, except when they prostrated themselves, but see below

day; and *another* fourth part they confessed, and wor-
4 shipped the LORD their God. Then stood up upon the
stairs of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, She-
baniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani, and cried
with a loud voice unto the LORD their God. Then the
5 Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting: and [a] blessed be thy glorious name, which is

[a] Or, *let them bless*

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confessed: see on Ezra x. 2.

worshipped: lit. 'prostrated themselves.' The verb comes, however, to be used in a general way for 'to worship', whatever the attitude.

4 f. The two lists in these two verses are no doubt one at bottom, the confusion arising through the carelessness and ignorance of copyists. Four of the names occur twice (Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Sherebiah). Siegfried, Torrey, &c., say that the Chronicler is responsible for introducing these names. If so, one wonders that he did not do his work better—unless his list has suffered from transmission. The LXX diverges from the Hebrew considerably in these lists (see below). It seems evident that the names stand for houses, not individuals (cf. Jeshua), and we are to think of each house as represented by its living chief.

4. stairs (of the Levites): Heb. 'high place.' It is the wooden platform of viii. 3 that must be meant.

Bani: the double occurrence of this name in ver. 4 shows how inaccurate the traditional text here is. We should probably read in one case 'Binnu' (see x. 9, xii. 8). The LXX translates Bani, Binnui, and Bunni as if all were *benē* (= sons of), so reducing the number from eight to five.

5. Stand: lit., 'arise.' The word denotes perhaps merely a summons to do what follows (see on Ezra x. 4), though it may bear its literal meaning; see on ver. 3 ('worshipped').

bless, &c.: these words resemble closely Psalms which have come down to us (see Ps. xl. 1, 14, lxxii. 19, cvi. 48, and the references below). See further on verses 6–37.

blessed be thy glorious name: this rendering is preferable to that of the margin (see on ver. 3 (indefinite subject)).

6–37. *Ezra's confession and prayer on behalf of the people.* Have we in this a veritable psalm of Ezra's time and by Ezra himself? Or is it the work of the Chronicler as Torrey and others hold?

exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou art the LORD, 6
even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of
heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that
are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou
preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth

Unless there is cogent evidence to the contrary we ought to accept the *prima facie* evidence of the narrative. It is remarkable that although this song makes abundant use of other parts of the O. T. there is hardly a single case in which it can be proved that a source so late as the Chronicler, or even as the Priestly Code, has been consulted (see the notes below). If Ezra or Nehemiah or a contemporary is not the author it is perfectly clear that the Chronicler is not, for his manner does not show itself from beginning to end. The writer is most of all influenced by the Deuteronomist, and this agrees with a time between the dominance of the D and P codes, see p. 18 f. The references given below to parallel passages will be chiefly to parts of the O. T. which this Psalmist seems to have had in mind.

6. Invocation.

We ought, with the LXX, to begin this verse with 'And Ezra said.' This is supported by a comparison with Ezra ix. 6–15. Under the priestly influence of a later time these words might well have been omitted, since to lead in prayer and confession is the prerogative of the priest alone in the P code (see Lev. xxi. 21).

Thou . . . LORD . . . alone: cf. Ps. lxxx. 18 and Isa. xliv. 6.

thou hast made: not created, as in Gen. i. 1, ii. 1.

heaven (and) **the heaven of heavens:** the copula 'and' must with all the versions be inserted (see Deut. x. 14). The expression 'heaven of heavens' is a Hebrew superlative, and is equivalent to 'the highest heaven.' The idea of a plurality of heavens underlies the expression, either three (see 2 Chron. xii. 12) or seven (as in the Talmud).

preservest: lit. 'keepest alive.'

7–31. *A rapid survey of the nation's past; its sins and its mercies.* With this survey compare Pss. lxxviii (pre-exilic or exilic), cvi, and also Pss. cv, cxl, cxli, though the three last speak only about God's goodness to Israel at the various stages of the nation's history, nothing in them being said of the nation's sins. This section has for background, as Pss. lxxviii and cvi, a period of national distress —they may all be the product of the same set of events. Here at all events the producing circumstances seem to be the opposition offered to the restoration of Judaism and its institutions and the galling feelings inseparable from bondage to an alien power.

This Psalm and that in Ezra ix. 6–15 have as much in common

7 thee. Thou art [a] the LORD the God, who didst choose
Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the
8 Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and
foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a
covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the
Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite,

[a] Or, *O* LORD

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as common authorship justifies us in expecting, but the differences are sufficient to prove that they were uttered on different occasions.

To the modern mind it seems passing strange to find in this Psalm, in Ezra ix. 6-15, and in many Psalms in the Psalter, one generation of men apologizing to God for the sins of their forefathers who lived hundreds of years before, and seeking Divine pardon for these sins. But to the people of these times there is no incongruity in all this, for the individual was lost in the nation, and whatever merit or demerit attached to the latter belonged as well to the separate members of the nation. We have a modification of the same thought (the solidarity of the race) in the old doctrine of original sin.

7f. *God's covenant with Abraham, and through him with the nation.*

7. who didst choose Abram: in Deut. vii. 8 and x. 15 God is said to choose Israel because He loved their ancestors. In the present passage God is said to choose Abram.

Ur of the Chaldees: see Gen. xv. 7 (E); cf. Gen. xi. 25, 31.

gavest him the name of Abraham: see Gen. xvii. 5 (P; J must also have had this).

8. (found his heart) **faithful**, i. e. believing (see Gen. xv. 6 (JE); cf. Ps. xxviii. 8; 1 Sam. iii. 20; Gal. iii. 9).

madest a covenant with him: see Gen. xv. 18-21 (JE) and cf. Gen. xvii. 2 ff. (P).

the Canaanite, &c.: this list is abridged from Gen. xv. 19-21 (JE) or from Deut. vii. 1. On Canaanite and Amorite see on Ezra ix. 1. Amorites and Canaanites represent the two most important ethnic elements in the pre-Israelitish population of Palestine, and originally no other native races seemed to have been mentioned, but later writers swelled the list for didactic purposes, magnifying the conquest which God enabled the nation to achieve. If the literal meaning of such lists is pressed it must be admitted that the longest of them (1 Gen. xv. 19-21) is very incomplete, as it embraces only tribes west of the Jordan and south of the upper reaches of that river.

Hittite: very important remains of the civilization of this people have been found in recent years in Asia Minor and elsewhere, proving that at one time they were numerous and powerful enough

and the Girgashite, even to give it unto his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous. And 9
thou sawest the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea; and shewedst signs 10
and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land; for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them; and didst get thee a name, as it is this day. And thou didst divide the sea before 11
them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their pursuers thou didst cast into the depths, as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover 12
thou leddest them in a pillar of cloud by day; and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. Thou camest down also upon 13
mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and

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to contest the supremacy of Western Asia with Assyria: see A. H. Sayce, *The Hittites*.

Jebusite: G. A. Smith denies that there ever was a city called Jebus (=Jerusalem, or a part of it): the existence of a city of that name being inferred from the tribal name.

for thou art righteous: because thou hast kept Thy promise (see Deut. xxxii. 4).

9-11. *In Egypt and the deliverance out of it.* The long interval between Abraham and the settlement in Egypt is passed over in silence.

9. thou sawest, &c.: see Exod. iii. 7 (J). Cf. Exod. xiv. 10 (J); xv. 4.

10. and shewedst signs: see Deut. vi. 22.

dealt proudly: see Exod. xviii. 11 (J), xvi. 14 (E); Deut. i. 43, xvii. 13.

didst get thee a name: see Exod. ix. 16 (J); cf. Isa. lxiii. 12; Jer. xxxii. 20. **as it is this day**: see Jer. xliv. 2.

11. thou didst divide, &c.: see Exod. xv. 4 (J).

12-21. *In the wilderness.*

12. pillar of cloud . . . pillar of fire: see ver. 19 and Exod. xiii. 2 f. (J); Num. xiv. 14 (JE); Deut. i. 33; cf. Ps. lxxviii. 14, cv. 39.

13. See Exod. xix. 18, 20.

Sinai (J, P) and Horeb (E, D) are simply different names in different sources for the same mountain. The old view is that Horeb was the name of the group or range and Sinai that of one

gavest them right judgements and true laws, good statutes
14 and commandments: and madest known unto them thy
holy sabbath, and commandedst them commandments,

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of the mountains in it; but biblical usage is against any distinction being made.

judgements: better 'ordinances': see on i. 7.

true laws: Heb. 'laws of faithfulness,' i. e. laws in harmony with God's revealed purpose to do good to His people: not capricious, much less inimical. We are not sharply to differentiate the terms grouped in this verse for the Divine legislation; they stand rather for different aspects of the same thing, just as in Ps. cxix (see Introd. to, *Century Bible*) the Divine word is expressed in each stanza by eight terms indicative of as many view-points.

14. holy sabbath: the epithet 'holy' seems to imply that this institution was now regarded as a religious one (see below). We have in this verse what is probably the earliest post-exilic reference to the Sabbath—the allusions in Ezekiel (xx. 12, 20, &c.) belonging to the exile itself. In pre-exilic times the references seem to show that the Sabbath was a rest day for man and for beast, a day for relaxation and recreation, and not directly intended for worship or religious work: see Exod. xxiii. 12 (JE), xxxiv. 21 (J); Deut. v. 12–15; Amos viii. 4; Hos. ii. 11. It was during the exile, when the great feasts could not be kept owing to separation from the Temple, that the Sabbath came to be set apart as a day for the studying of the Scripture and for sacred song and prayer. The above is, however, an *a priori* conclusion, but it is almost certainly in accordance with the facts. After the return, when the Sabbath does loom into view, it is, as here, a 'holy' day; yet for some time after the return, and in some circles during the exile, this day does not seem to have commanded much, if any, notice. It is not once spoken of in Isaiah, not even in the second part, except in passages assigned to the time of Nehemiah (lvi. 2, lviii. 13 f.). There is not a word about it in Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, Psalms, Proverbs, or Job, or even Genesis, except in the account of its institution, which is late (P). Ezra recognizes its claims in the present passage, though in no other extant words of his, and Nehemiah made its observance a matter of great consequence: see Neh. xiii. 13–21, with which must go Isa. lviii. 13 f. and Jer. xvii. 19–21, as of the same period and even movement.

In the P code and connected parts of the O. T. the Sabbath is a religious institution (see Exod. xxxi. 12–17 (P); Num. xxviii. 9 f.). It is quite clear that the Israelitish Sabbath is not a replica of the Babylonian *Šabattu*, if even the two had at all any genitic connexion. The Babylonian institution was a religious one from

and statutes, and a law, by the hand of Moses thy servant:
and gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and 15
broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their
thirst, and commandedst them that they should go in to
possess the land which thou hadst lifted up thine hand
to give them. But they and our fathers dealt proudly, 16
and hardened their neck, and hearkened not to thy com-
mandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful 17

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the first; the Sabbath became that only after the exile—a proof that the influence of Babylon was exerted, if at all, in post-exilic times only. The Babylonian term *Šabattu* was applied to the fifteenth of the month only, and was identical, at least originally, with the Full Moon Festival[1]. The 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st and 28th days of the month in the Babylonian calendar were unlucky days (*ukhulgal*) for certain acts, not rest or sacred days at all[1]. See Meinhold, *Sabbat und Woche*, 1905; A. R. Gordan, *The Early Traditions of Genesis*, 216 ff., 1907, and review by the present writer in *Review of Theology and Philosophy*, vol. iii, p. 689 ff.

commandments: see on ver. 13 and cf. i. 7 and Ezra vii. 11 for similar combinations of synonyms.

15. bread from heaven: see Exod. xvi. 4 (JE); cf. Ps. cv. 40. In Ps. lxxviii. 25 it is called (in a corrected text) 'the bread of angels': see on ver. 20 ('manna'). As regards the hunger and thirst of the people see Deut. xxviii. 48.

go in to possess: see Deut. ix. 5.

lifted up thine hand: i. e. (as in A.V.) 'sworn,' here an anthropomorphism, for the idiom (common in many languages) rests on the custom still widely prevalent (as in Scotland) of pointing to Deity as witness when an oath is taken: see Exod. vi. 8, &c.; Num. xiv. 28 f., 33. For the existence of the practice in Africa see Johnstone, *Journal Anthrop. Institute*, xxxii, p. 264.

16. (they) **and** (our fathers): render 'even'; it is the explicative conjunction *waw*, corresponding to a similar use of the Greek *καί* and the Latin *et*.

dealt proudly: see on ver. 10.

hardened their neck: as animals refusing to bear the yoke: see verses 17, 29 and Deut. x. 16; Jer. vii. 26. Cf. Exod. xxxii. 9.

17. refused to obey: see Jer. iv. 6. Note the heaped-up charges in this verse.

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[1] See Pinches, *PSBA.*, 1904, 51 ff.; Zimmern, *KAT.*(3), 592; *ZDMG.*, 1904, 200 ff., 458 ff.; Benzinger, *Arch.*(2), 338 ff.; C. H. W. Johns, *Expositor*, 1906, ii. 433; Driver, *Genesis*, 34 f.

of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their neck, [a] and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art [b] a God ready to pardon, gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger,
18 and plenteous in mercy, and forsookest them not. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had
19 wrought great provocations; yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of cloud departed not from over them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.
20 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and

[a] The Sept. has, *and appointed a captain to return to their bondage in Egypt.* See Num. xiv. 4. [b] Heb. *a God of forgivenesses.*

wonders: Heb. 'outstanding acts,' used especially for what God did for His people, whether in nature or in history; see Exod. iii. 20 (J), &c. The word is very common in the Psalms, but, though common also in JE, it is absent from P.

and in their rebellion, &c.: render (see R.Vm.), 'and appointed a head (or leader), so that (under his leadership) they might return to their bondage in Egypt.' No change in the text is necessary for the above translation except a trivial one on a single Hebrew word.

appointed a captain (lit., 'a head'): so the Greek versions (though different Greek words are used in *Luc.* and LXX). Haupt, following an Assyrian idiom, renders 'they made head,' i. e. 'they resisted.' This, however, is not Hebrew. Bertheau and Stade render 'they turned their head' ('to return,' &c.).

their bondage: see on Ezra ix. 9.

a God ready to pardon: cf. Dan. ix. 9, which seems to depend on the present passage as being the older.

For the epithets applied in this verse to God see reference Bibles.

18. See Exod. xxxii. 4 (E), 8 (JE).

wrought great provocations: the Hebrew means 'they exhibited great contempt' (for God). The noun occurs besides only in ver. 26 and in Ezek. xxxv. 12.

19. to shew them light, and the way: render (omitting with the versions 'and'), 'to show them light in the way,' &c.

20. thy good spirit: see Num. xi. 17, 23–29 (E); cf. Ps. cxliii. 10; Isa. lxi. 11.

withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest
them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou 21
sustain them in the wilderness, *and* they lacked nothing;
their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.
Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and peoples, [a]which 22
thou didst allot after their portions: so they possessed
the land of Sihon, even the land of the king of Heshbon,
and the land of Og king of Bashan. Their children also 23
multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest
them into the land, concerning which thou didst say to

[a] Or, *and didst distribute them into* every *corner*

manna: see on ver. 15. What is here said of the supply of manna and water has its source in Num. xi. 6-9 (JE), not as ver. 15 in Exod. xvi. 4 (JE): see Ps. lxxviii. 17 ff., where the same two sources seem combined. Exod. xvi. 25 gives a popular etymology of the word manna ('what is it'), which Semitic philology shows to be incorrect. The manna of Scripture is generally identified with those thick drops which in May and June exude of nights from the tamarisk tree through punctures caused by insects. They are gathered by the Bedouin Arabs of the Sinaitic Peninsula and greatly relished. Another view is that a kind of stone lichen largely eaten by Arabs is the original manna. In any case here, as in Exod. xvi, Num. xi, Ps. lxxviii. 24, and John vi. 31, manna is regarded as due to a special act on God's part, and something in the circumstances under which the wilderness manna was supplied may have made the supply really miraculous.

21. See Deut. ii. 7, viii. 4, xxix. 4.

(their feet) **swelled not**: rendered 'blistered not' (through walking).

22–25. *The Conquest of Canaan.*

22. after their portions: Heb., 'according to a corner' (Lev. xix. 17, 27), or 'according to a portion' ('corner') of territory (only in Num. xxiv. 17, and then doubtfully). Better with LXX, Vulg. omit the clause: it is perhaps a dittograph of the last part of the preceding words. *Luc.* and Syr. give quite different renderings from each other and from that of the E.VV.

possessed: see Deut. i. 21.

even the land of: omit (with LXX, Vulg.); it is an obvious dittograph, the same word written twice by mistake. The obviousness of this is seen in the Hebrew only.

23. See Gen. xxii. 17 (JE); Deut. i. 10.

24 their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. So the
children went in and possessed the land, and thou sub-
duedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the
Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their
kings, and the peoples of the land, that they might do
25 with them as they would. And they took fenced cities,
and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all good
things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards, and oliveyards,
and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were
filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy
26 great goodness. Nevertheless they were disobedient, and
rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their back,
and slew thy prophets which testified against them to
turn them again unto thee, and they wrought great pro-
27 vocations. Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand

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24. Begin this verse with **and thou subduedst,** &c., the preceding words (absent from the LXX) anticipating unnecessarily what follows.

thou subduedst . . . the Canaanites. There is a word-play in the Hebrew which in English is lost, the noun and verb having the same root-letters, as if in English one said 'he subjected the subjects' (of the German Emperor).

25. See Deut. vi. 10 f., viii. 7-9.

became fat (i. e. sensuous): see Deut. xxxii. 15.

26-29. *Period of the Judges.*

26. they were disobedient: the Hebrew verb (= to be refractory) is quite common in Deuteronomy (see ix. 7, 24, &c.).

cast thy law behind their back: see 1 Kings xiv. 9; Ezek. xxiii. 35.

slew thy prophets: see 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, xix. 10; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20 f.; Matt. v. 12, xxiii. 29 ff.; Luke xi. 47, xiii. 33 ff.; Acts vii. 32; 1 Thess. ii. 15; Heb. xi. 32 f.

which testified, &c.: a favourite expression of D and his school (see Deut. iv. 26, &c.); never found in P or his circle (Chronicles, &c.).

provocations: see on ver. 18.

27 f. Here we have the recurring pragmatism of Judges—sins, repentance, deliverance—repeated in that order (see Judges ii. 11 ff.).

of their adversaries, who distressed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours who saved them out of the hand of their adversaries. But after they had 28
rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; and testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring 29
them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgements, (which if a man do, he shall live in them,) and [a] withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. Yet many years didst thou 30
bear with them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit

[a] Heb. *they gave a stubborn shoulder.*

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27. adversaries . . . distressed . . . trouble: the Hebrew basis in all these words is identical, so that the Hebrew exhibits a play on words which in a translation is missed; cf. 'adversaries . . . treated adversely . . . adverse (circumstances).'

saviours: the Hebrew word (the root of which is found in 'Joshua,' or 'Jesus'), stands here for the judges, as in Judges iii. 9, 15, &c.; cf. Judges ii. 16 for the corresponding verb ('delivered').

28. when they returned and cried: render (in accordance with Heb. idiom), 'when they again cried.'

29. commandments . . . judgements: see on i. 7.

30 f. *Period of the prophets.*

30. didst thou bear with them: render, 'didst thou continue to be kind to them.' The Hebrew verb = 'to draw out,' 'to extend,' and with the noun denoting 'kindness' understood, means as above. We have the full phrase in Ps. xxxvi. 10 and cix. 12, and in Jer. xxxi. 3.

testifiedst: see on ver. 26.

by thy spirit: see Zech. vii. 12 and cf. 2 Chron. xxiv. 19 f., xxxvi. 28; 2 Pet. i. 21.

through thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the peoples of the
31 lands. Nevertheless in thy manifold mercies thou didst not make a full end of them, nor forsake them; for thou
32 art a gracious and merciful God. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the travail seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time
33 of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit thou art just in all that is come upon us; for thou hast dealt
34 truly, but we have done wickedly: neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law,

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hand: often in the O. T. = 'power.'

peoples of the lands: see on Ezra iv. 4, ix. 1.

31. thou: the Greek versions seem to have followed a text in which the Hebrew pronoun is for emphasis separately expressed as well as implied in the verb: 'thou, (even) thou didst not make.' Guthe and Bertholet adopt this.

didst not make a full end: see Jer. iv. 27, v. 10, 18; Ezek. xi. 13, xx. 17.

32-37. *Prayer that God may avert the punishment which the nation so richly deserves.*

32. our God, the great, &c.: see on i. 5.

travail: the Hebrew word has in it especially the idea of weariness: see Exod. xviii. 8, &c.

princes: see on Ezra ix. 1. The Hebrew word here is that used by Ezra, not that common in Nehemiah (see on Neh. ii. 16).

since the time of the kings of Assyria: see on Ezra ix. 7 and cf. 2 Kings xv. 29, xvii. 23.

33. just: see on Ezra ix. 15. Note the ethical standard by which God and man are equally judged. The blame for Israel's suffering is on Israel, not on God. Whence came so lofty a conception of Deity to this simple people?

(hast dealt) **truly**: 'faithfully' would better convey the sense of the Hebrew. God has not departed from the word He has spoken

34. kept (lit. 'done') **thy law**: the Hebrew expression occurs here only.

nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. For 35
they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. Behold, we are servants 36
this day, and as for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it. And it yieldeth much in- 37
crease unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have power over our bodies, and

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nor hearkened, &c.: a Deuteronomic expression: see Deut. xxxii. 16; 2 Kings xvii. 5.

thy testimonies, &c.: render, 'thy solemn admonitions wherewith thou didst solemnly admonish them.' The Hebrew noun denotes strictly 'a warning given in the presence of witnesses.' It is one of the eight synonyms for 'the word of God' in Ps. cxix (see Introd. to in *Century Bible*). The phrase found here occurs besides in the Psalms and almost exclusively in Deuteronomy.

35. they: in Hebrew this pronoun is emphatic, the reference being to the kings and princes in contradistinction to the 'thou' and 'we' of ver. 33.

in their kingdom: i. e. in the time when they had an independent kingdom in contrast to the state of things now prevailing, see ver. 36.

goodness: see ver. 25.

wicked works: see Zech. i. 4.

36. servants: the same Hebrew word is rendered 'bondmen' in Ezra ix. 9 (see on).

the land, &c.: they are now servants in the land which God gave to them and in which, if they had served God, they would have been still masters.

37. it yieldeth much increase in the way of taxation to the Persian kingdom. The Hebrew noun (='increase') denotes often 'land produce' (Lev. xxv. 22, &c.).

(unto) **the kings:** Ezra and Nehemiah had both been commissioned by one of them to return to their native home to restore Jewish religious institutions.

because of our sins: our subjection to others is but the fruit of our refusing to subject ourselves to Thy will.

our bodies='our persons' (according to Semitic usage). If

over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great

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we do not pay our taxes they can compel us to pay off our debt in service (agricultural, military).

our cattle: 'or they will distrain upon our cattle.'

at their pleasure: Oriental taxation is very much what the ruler or tax-collector wishes it to be.

The prayer ends abruptly in the M.T., and it seems quite evident that in the original draft there was a petition that God might deliver them out of their present distress, or at least some suitable ending. We should not, however, be too confident in imposing modern literary canons on ancient literature.

IX. 38-X. There has been much discussion as to the position of chapter x (including always the last verse of the preceding chapter) in the Book of Nehemiah. Of late years the majority of recognized O.T. scholars agree that Neh. vii. 73^b–x belongs to the history of Ezra and his work, and ought to have been added to the book called 'Ezra' or incorporated into it. So Ewald, Wellhausen, Schrader, Klostermann, Baudissin, Budde, Ryssel, Bertholet. But there has been an inclination on the part of some scholars to separate ch. x and vii. 73^b–ix, as is done by Kosters (who claims that the events of ch. x followed those of ch. xiii), by Winckler, and by Bertholet (who, ascribing vii. 73^b–ix to the Ezra memoirs, holds that ch. x belongs to the Nehemiah memoirs). The principal reasons put forward by Bertholet for his view are these[1]:—

1. Ch. ix does not come to a complete end, so that in any case there is a break in the connexion of events (see on ix. 37).

2. In viii. 1–ix. 5 it is the third person that is used (leaving out of account the prayer in ix. 6–37, which is—Bertholet thinks—no original part of the section (but why not?)). In ch. x, on the contrary, the first person reappears. It may be said in reply that in viii–ix. 5 we have a narrative of Ezra's doings, in which the third person is very suitably employed; whereas in ch. x we have a verbatim copy of the obligation entered into. Moreover, we find the first person in ix. 32-37, which cannot be so lightly set aside as an interpolation as is done by this writer.

3. At the head of the signatories in x. 1 ff. is the name of Nehemiah, whereas Ezra is not mentioned from the beginning of that chapter to its close.

But most scholars, including Bertholet, admit that the name Nehemiah is a late insertion in viii. 9, and there is very good reason for so regarding it in x. 1. Following his name is that of Zedekiah, of whom we know nothing at all unless he was the king of that name.

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[1] See *Commentary*, p. 75 f.

It is, moreover, likely that the names in x. 2-9 stand for houses and not for persons, each house being represented by its head, who signed as such. The house to which Nehemiah belonged would be in Jerusalem, and there is no difficulty in conceiving of its chief, or at least the principal member, in Jerusalem in the later days of Ezra, signing on behalf of the house (clan). If this view be correct Ezra would not need separate mention, as he would be included in 'Seraiah' (see x. 2).

Some of the grounds on which Kosters places x after xiii are these[1]:

1. x. 32-39 implies xiii. 10-13. This, of course, is a question of probability only, and to the present writer the contrary seems the likelier supposition. Kosters assumes that the arrangements for the support of Levites and priests mentioned in x. 37 ff. must, if once made, have continued in operation even during Nehemiah's absence. In that case the withholding of the tithe from the Levites must have caused loss to the priests as well, since they were allotted one-tenth of the Levites' tithe (x. 37 ff.). But the Levites alone complain, not the priests (xiii. 10). It must, however, be borne in mind that our narrative is defective, and what one desiderates in cases like this might have formed part of a fuller history which is largely lost. Then again, the priests after the exile grew in numbers and in power very rapidly, the Levites losing in influence and popularity. It is not at all unlikely that the priests, after the events of ch. x, took matters into their own hands, received the tithes payable in the first instance to the Levites, and refused to let the latter have what was necessary for their maintenance.

See further on ch. xiii. 1-3, &c.

2. Kosters maintains further that the reference to the Sabbath in xiii. 15-22 is older than that in x. 32. Could the desecration of the Sabbath implied in the former passage have taken place after the stringent undertaking in x. 33? Would not Nehemiah have referred to the solemn, signed covenant? All this is *a priori* reasoning and depends for its cogency very much upon the individual to whom it is addressed. We know that the covenant to separate from strange wives was violated several times, yet we have no record that in each case the violated covenant is cited.

Kosters refers to other parts of ch. x in which ch. xiii is presupposed (see below notes on the two chapters).

In favour of connecting ch. x immediately with the preceding one are the following considerations, though the present writer recognizes that on neither side of the controversy is the evidence very decisive:—

1. The use of the first person plural in both chapters (see ix. 32 ff., and x, cf. verses 29, &c.).

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[1] See *Wiederherstellung*, 64 ff.

38 distress. [a] And [b] yet for all this we make a [c] sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, our Levites, *and* our priests, [d] seal unto it.

[a] [Ch. x. 1 in Heb.] [b] Or, *because of* [c] Or, *faithful*
[d] Heb. *are at the sealing.*

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2. One might expect the reading of the law and the confession and prayer which followed to lead to an attempt at the reorganization of the society and a restoration of its laws and institutions.

The series of laws and regulations mentioned in ch. x are such as would be likely now to come into existence. The references to such laws in ch. xiii are sporadic, and seem due to their neglect during the absence of Nehemiah. Ch. x contains a programme for the future, and one sees in this a natural fitness. The solemn undertaking of x. 29 accords well with the deep earnestness which pervades ix. 6 ff.

3. The arrangement in xiii. 1 ff. to separate from Ammonites and Moabites is more likely to have been subsequent to the putting away of strange wives, this last being the first and chief concern of the returned community.

ix. 38–x. 27. *The signatories to the covenant.*

ix. **38.** This verse belongs (as in the M. T., not so in Luther's Bible as Ryle inaccurately says) to ch. x. It is with this verse that the section concerning the signing of the covenant opens.

yet for all this: render, 'on account of all this.' The reference in this must be to a lost paragraph, which recited the causes and terms of the covenant. There is nothing in the foregoing confession and prayer to supply a starting-point for this verse.

sure covenant: the Heb. word (='something firm') occurs only here and in xi. 23, and is cognate to the adjective (=firm) transliterated 'Amen' (see on v. 13). Though the ordinary word used for covenant (see ix. 8) does not occur here, the verb technically used for making a covenant (='to cut,' as in Greek, Latin, &c., on account of the ratification by sacrifice, see Gen. xv) is found here, showing that some kind of covenant is meant, though there can be no certainty on the matter. Perhaps the regular word for covenant (*berit*) is avoided, as it almost invariably describes what God does, and not, as here and xl. 23, what man undertakes to do.

write it; and our princes, &c.: render (to end of verse), 'and our princes, our Levites (and) our priests wrote their names to what was sealed.' The only change in the Hebrew is the omission of one consonant (='and') which has been written twice by mistake, or it may have been accidentally omitted before 'our priests' (see rendering above).

The E.VV. make no sense of this verse.

The princes, &c., attached their names to the covenant, which was afterwards sealed and put safely away in a jar or other

Now those that sealed were, Nehemiah the Tirshatha, 10
the son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah; Seraiah, Azariah, 2
Jeremiah; Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah; Hattush, She- 3, 4
baniah, Malluch; Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah; Daniel, 5, 6
Ginnethon, Baruch; Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin; 7
Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these were the priests. And 8, 9

receptacle. Babylonian contracts upon clay tablets have been found at Nippur[1] and at other places, enclosed in clay sealed envelopes, on the outside of which was a duplicate of the contract to be consulted when necessary, the sealed and signed contract to be consulted only in cases of emergency (see Jer. xxxii. 11). On sealing = signing in the Orient, see on Esther iii. 10.

x. 1. those that sealed: render, 'on what was (afterwards) sealed were (the following names) Nehemiah,' &c. If, with the Hebrew, we read the plural 'things' sealed, we must understand that the signers attached their names to the original covenant and its duplicate (see on ix. 38).

The names of those who signed are arranged in classes. It is to be borne in mind that in these lists we have names of the houses the representatives of which signed the document, not the names of individuals.

Nehemiah the Tirshatha ... Zedekiah: the list is headed by the signatories of Nehemiah's house (i.e. the house to which belonged the Nehemiah soon to play a great part) and the royal house of Zedekiah. So interpreted the words need cause no difficulty. Many futile attempts to identify this Zedekiah have been made. Probably, however, this part of ver. 2 is a late interpolation, due to a desire to introduce those two great names. Nehemiah's official title is *pekhah* (= governor), not *Tirshatha* (see on viii. 9 and Ezra ii. 67).

2-8. *Priestly houses.* This list has twenty-one names as against twenty-two in xii. 1-3. Moreover, sixteen names are identical in both lists. We read in Ezra ii. (36-39) of only four priestly houses as having returned with Zerubbabel. But the number and influence of the priests grew rapidly and continuously after the exile.

2. Seraiah: Ezra belonged to this house, so that his name is really included in the list.

9-13. *Levitical houses.* Seventeen are mentioned as against two in Ezra ii. 40 (see on). Levites increased, as did priests, after the return, though they gradually came to be more and more the subordinates of the priests (see xii. 8).

[1] Peters, *Nippur*, ii. 198.

the Levites: namely, Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui
10 of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; and their brethren,
11 Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan; Mica,
12, 13 Rehob, Hashabiah; Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah; Ho-
14 diah, Bani, Beninu. The chiefs of the people: Parosh,
15 Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani; Bunni, Azgad, Bebai;
16, 17, 18 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin; Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur; Hodiah,
19, 20 Hashum, Bezai; Hariph, Anathoth, [a] Nobai; Magpiash,
21, 22 Meshullam, Hezir; Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua; Pelatiah,
23, 24 Hanan, Anaiah; Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub; Hallo-
25 hesh, Pilha, Shobek; Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah;
26, 27 and Ahiah, Hanan, Anan; Malluch, Harim, Baanah.
28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinim, and all they that had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands unto

[a] Another reading is, *Nebai*.

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9. namely: the one Heb. consonant (*waw*) so translated must (with the versions and some thirty Heb. MSS.) be omitted.

14–27. *Lay houses.* Forty-one are named, twenty-one of them (verses 15–21) occurring almost completely in Ezra ii (and Neh. vii). Of the rest (verses 22–27) some are mentioned in ch. iii.

28 f. *The individual members of the houses associate themselves with their representatives, endorsing their action.* It is individuals that are now indicated by priests, Levites, &c., the houses having been previously so named.

28. porters ... singers ... Nethinim: named as distinct from the Levites (see vii. 43 ff., Ezra ii. 40 ff.). To the Chronicler all are equally Levites (see 1 Chron. xxiii. 3–5, &c.). So Smend, Baudissin, &c., against Torrey[1], who denies the usage described above, not on inadequate grounds as the present writer thinks.

Nethinim: see on Ezra ii. 43.

all they that had separated themselves, i. e. such as had not lived in Babylon, home-staying Jews who had complied with the new law (see on Ezra vi. 21). Meyer[2] holds that proselytes, non-Jewish converts to Judaism from the heathen around, are meant, but Ezra's and Nehemiah's principles left no room in Judaism for such converts.

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[1] *Composition*, &c., p. 22 f. [2] *Die Entstehung*, &c., p. 129.

the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters,
every one that had knowledge and understanding; they 29
clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a
curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was
given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and
do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his
judgements and his statutes; and that we would not give 30
our daughters unto the peoples of the land, nor take
their daughters for our sons: and if the peoples of the 31
land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to
sell, that we would not buy of them on the sabbath, or

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peoples of the lands: see on Ezra iii. 3.

wives . . . sons . . . daughters: see on viii. 2.

29. nobles, lit. 'powerful ones,' the word in iii. 5 (see on) not that so rendered in ii. 16 (see on). Here the word stands for the persons who signed the sealed covenant on behalf of the houses they represented.

entered into a curse: the same noun (accompanied by the causative form of the verb here) is translated 'oath' in Ezek. xvii. 13, and in fact means both ('he brought him under,' i.e. into 'an oath'), the oath being one of imprecation, which amounts to a curse. The use of a following word meaning distinctly 'oath' shows that it is the imprecatory side of the first noun that is here in view. On the present occasion there must have been some ceremony performed during which the terms of the curse would be recited. The belief in these times was that an uttered curse executed itself by its own inherent energy (see art. 'Magic' (by the present writer), *Encyc. Brit.*, col. 289[b], and also art. 'Blessings and Curses,' col. 591 f.).

God's law: see on viii. 1.

commandments . . . judgements . . . statutes: see on i. 7.

30-39. *The obligations which the people take upon themselves.*

30. that we would not give our daughters, &c.: there is no explicit prohibition of mixed marriages in the P code, so that the law here cited must be that of Exod. xxxiv. 16 (J) and Deut. vii. 3.

the peoples of the land: see on Ezra iii. 3.

31. The law of the Sabbath here is much likelier to be prior to that of xiii. 15-22 than (as Kosters holds) the reverse. The fact that this law was broken is no proof that it did not exist. Moreover xiii. 15 ff. goes beyond the present undertaking, in that it for-

on a holy day: and that we would forgo the [a] seventh year,
32 and the [b] exaction of every debt. Also we made ordinances
for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a
33 shekel for the service of the house of our God; for the
shewbread, and for the continual meal offering, and for

[a] See Exod. xxiii. 10, 11. [b] See Deut. xv. 1, 2.

bids the bringing into Jerusalem on the Sabbath of wares to be sold, even if no Jews bought them.

a holy day: any one of the festivals.

that we would forgo the seventh year: the technical words in this verse show that the reference is to Exod. xxiii. 10 f. (JE) and not at all to the late law in Lev. xxv. 2–7, another proof of early date.

the exaction of every debt: referring to Deut. xv. 1–3, which enacts that every seventh year (beginning at any time) debts should be remitted (so Steuernagel, Bertholet), or (as Dillmann and Driver? hold) suspended until the year was past. It is important to remember that among the Jews loans were made to poor people as acts of charity (see on v. 1–5).

32 f. *A tax of one-third of a shekel for the upkeep of the Temple services.* The words **we made ordinances**, &c., show that this is a new arrangement, replacing, it is probable, a voluntary and therefore uncertain payment. There is no prior law on the subject. Exod. xxx. 13 (late P) belongs to a much later time, and, moreover, the half-shekel poll-tax there is merely an *ad hoc* arrangement according to Bertholet, and not a law for the future. But against this last view may be adduced 2 Chron. xxiv. 4 f.; Matt. xvii. 24, 27; and Josephus, *Wars*, vii. 6, 6.

Assuming that Exod. xxx. 13 imposes a poll-tax of half a shekel, this shows, what is otherwise abundantly proved, the growth of priestly influence and privilege.

Benzinger[1] gives figures to show that one-third of the shekel of the present verse (Babylonian, Persian) has the same value as one half the shekel of Exod. xxx. 13 (Phoenician, Maccabean), so that in that case there is no contradiction.

33. In this verse the separate uses to which the tax thus imposed was to be put are enumerated.

shewbread: lit., 'bread set in rows' (see Lev. xxiv. 5 f. (P); cf. 1 Chron. ix. 32, xxiii. 29). In Exod. xxv. 30 (P) it is called 'bread of the face' or 'presence,' because exposed before Deity, and 'holy bread' in 1 Sam. xxi. 4. The table of shewbread was originally an altar, the bread on it being the offering. Sayce, Fried. Delitzsch,

[1] *Heb. Archäologie*(2), p. 200 f.

the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. And we 34

Haupt and, hesitatingly, Zimmern[1] say that such table-like altars with unleavened cakes on them existed in Babylonian temples.

continual (= 'daily') **burnt offering**: see on Ezra iii. 3, ix. 4. The custom implied here—that of presenting a meat and meal offering in the morning and evening respectively—is that which prevailed immediately before the exile (see p. 9).

of the Sabbaths . . . new moons . . . set feasts: the continual, i. e. daily, sacrifices were to be made on feast days as if they were ordinary days, but additions had to be made in each case according to a scale given in detail in Num. xxviii f.

The **set feasts** are given in detail in Num. xxviii. 16–xxix. 38, though the laws of Num. xxviii f. may represent later developments of the kindred laws of Nehemiah's time. We have no means of deciding this or the contrary.

the holy things: a general term for sacrifices. In 2 Chron. xxix. 33 the word is used specifically of 'thank offerings,' and in 2 Chron. xxxv. 13 of sacrifices offered on the days following the Passover. Bertholet says the word stands here for the compensation (wrongly called peace) offerings, but the above passages cited by him do not prove that, nor does anything else.

sin offerings: so called because intended to secure forgiveness for sin committed. The earliest reference to these is in Ezek. xlv. 17. It formed in later times a part of the regular burnt offering, being presented at New Moon and other festivals: see Num. xxviii. 15 ff., xxix; cf. Lev. xvi. 21.

to make atonement means lit. to 'cover,' i. e. God's eyes, so that He may not see and therefore punish sin; so the Arabic cognate verb. 1 Sam. xii. 3 makes this explanation very plausible, the word there rendered 'ransom' being the noun cognate with the verb 'to cover (my eyes).' Some derive the word from a verb = 'to obliterate,' 'wipe out' (cf. the Assyrian): see Lev. iv. 10 and Bertholet's long note on Lev. i. 4.

and for all the work: referring back to the beginning of the verse, not to the immediately preceding words.

In **all the work** we have a summing up of what has been mentioned in this verse.

the work: see iii. 22; Ezra vi. 9, vii. 20–22.

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[1] *KAT.*(3), p. 600 (including note 3).

cast lots, the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as
35 it is written in the law: and to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all manner

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34. we cast lots: see xi. 1; 1 Chron. xxv. 13 f. The lot was cast not merely to prevent dispute, but also because Deity was supposed thus to express His will.

the priests, the Levites: the regular Deuteronomic phrase (see Deut. xviii. 1). Perhaps, however, we should here (with all the ancient versions) read 'the priests and the Levites.'

for the wood offering: better, 'for the bringing of the wood': see xiii. 31.

at times appointed: see xiii. 31 and Ezra x. 14. According to Rabbinical tradition wood was brought nine times a year[1]; but Josephus, *Wars*, ii. 17, 6, seems to show that this was done on the 14th of Ab (July–August), which came hence to be called 'the feast of the wood offering' or of 'the bringing of wood.'

as it is written: no law of the kind can be traced in the Pentateuch or anywhere else in the O.T. Perhaps the reference is to some law then existing, and classed with other laws of supposed Mosaic origin. But we have here clear proof that Ezra's law was not our Pentateuch. Rawlinson refers to Lev. vi. 12, which has, however, to do with the *burning* not the *bringing* of wood for the altar.

35. firstfruits (of our ground): see Exod. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26 (JE); cf. Deut. xviii. 4, xxvi. 2 ff. In ver. 37 a different Hebrew word (*rā'shēēt*) is so translated; here the Heb. word is *bikkurim*. Do the two words connote two different things? Gesenius, Wellhausen[2], Bertholet, &c., answer in the affirmative, holding that *bikkurim* = 'first-ripe fruit' as the E.VV. render it in Nahum iii. 12 and Num. xviii. 13; the etymology supports this (the same root lies in the Hebrew word for 'firstborn,' *bekōr*). The other Hebrew word (*rā'shēēt*) means elsewhere often 'the best,' 'choicest' (see Prov. iii. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 21) and it may denote this in ver. 37 and kindred passages.

Many, however, hold that whatever difference the two words originally had, in actual usage they are synonymous: so

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[1] *Taanit*, iv. 5, 8. See Schürer, ii. 1. 252 (Germ.(4) ii. 260).
[2] *Proleg.*(3) 165.

of trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: also 36
the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is
written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of
our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the
priests that minister in the house of our God: and that 37
we should bring the firstfruits of our [a] dough, and our

[a] Or, *coarse meal*

Dillmann [1], G. B. Gray [2], and of older commentators, Clericus and Hupfeld.

In later times the word *bikkurim* came to be applied to the first-fruits of the 'seven kinds' of trees enumerated in Deut. viii. 8, the word *rā'shēēt* being used in reference to other products of the ground [3].

In each case only a portion of the firstfruits was offered to Yahweh, as is made clear in Deut. xxvi. 2 ff. by the use of the partitive *min*.

The practice of offering to Deity the first products of the soil, common among many ancient peoples [4], could not have arisen among the Hebrews until they had exchanged a pastoral for an agricultural life. Probably they took over the practice from the Canaanites.

36. the firstborn of our sons: see Exod. xxii. 29, on which the present prescription seems to rest. Taking these two passages by themselves one might infer that firstborn boys, as firstborn male animals, had to be sacrificed, and perhaps the words had at the first this meaning, for there are several traces of the practice of human sacrifice in the O.T.; cf. the case of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 1 ff.) and that of Jephthah's daughter (Judges xi. 34 ff.). But we are here no doubt to assume the operation of the law of redemption recorded in Exod. xiii. 13, xxxiv. 20 (J); cf. Num. xviii. 16 (P).

cattle: explained more fully below.

as it is written: the reference is to what follows; see below.

firstlings of our herds . . . flocks: no passages seem to suit for bases except Num. xviii. 15–18, which in its present setting at least is later than our passage. According to this unclean animals were to be redeemed (ver. 15), clean ones to be sacrificed (ver. 17).

37. firstfruits: Heb. *rā'shēēt*; see on ver. 35.

dough: so the LXX; but the exact sense of the Hebrew word, found only here and Num. xv. 21 (see Gray on), is very

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[1] On Exod. xxiii. 19. [2] On Num. xviii. 13.
[3] Schürer (4), ii. 249 (Eng. II. i. 137 f.).
[4] Robertson Smith (*Rel. Sem.*(2), 241).

heave offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, [a] the

[a] Or, *the vintage*

uncertain. Apparently some kind of cereal food is meant, of which part of the first made had to be presented to Yahweh. Perhaps oaten or wheaten porridge is meant.

heave offerings: a very inaccurate and misleading translation, for the offerings meant were not 'heaved.' The word means simply 'a gift' or 'contribution,' and the cognate verb = 'to give.' Driver on Deut. xii. 6, in *DB.* iii. 588 and on Mal. iii. 8 (*Century Bible*) suggests 'contributions,' lit. 'what is lifted from a larger quantity,' and so given.

The word is used in P of contributions (money, spoils, &c.) for sacred purposes (see Exod. xxv. 2 f., xxx. 13–15; Num. xxxi. 29, 41). In Ezra it stands for the donations made to the Temple, and in Ezek. (xlv. 1, 6, &c.) it is used of the land reserved for priests and Levites; see further Lev. vii. 32–34. What specifically the word connotes here and in xii. 44 is not quite clear, but the present writer is inclined to think that it is a general term for what follows; see on ver. 39.

37[b]–38. *Tithes.* The sacred tithe is not known in the older codes, Deut. xiv. 22–27 and xxvi. 15 being the earliest biblical law enacting it, Num. xxv. 32 (P) is later, and Lev. xxvii. 30–33 later still. The present law differs from those in the above Deut. passages, see Ryle, *Com.*, p. 279.

Tithing as a principle of taxation prevailed to a large extent among ancient nations, Egyptians, Babylonians, &c.[1]

The arrangement in the present instance was as follows: The tithe of land produce (not here of the cattle as in Lev. xxvii. 32) was brought to the Levites, as yet living in country places, who received it in the presence of a priest who was to prevent any purloining. The Levites brought a tithe of this tithe (see Num. xviii. 25–28) to Jerusalem for the maintenance of the priests.

There is nothing about the payment of tithes in the older codes, but it is prescribed in the D and P codes, only that the law in each case differs, the later law favouring the priests in harmony with the growing power of the latter. In D (see Deut. xii. 17 f., xiv. 22–29, xxvi. 12) the tithe is levied on vegetable produce alone, and moreover in two years out of three it was devoted to the sacred festivals in which the offerer and his family shared at the central sanctuary (Deut. xiv. 22–29). In the third year it was to be stored up in the offerer's own city for the purpose of being distributed among the poor (Deut. xiv. 28 f., xxvi. 12). In both these cases the priests and others had part of the tithe thus offered.

[1] See C. F. Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Proceedings*, p. 231 (note).

wine and the oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites; for they, the Levites, take the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. And the priest the son of 38
Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. For the children of Israel and 39
the children of Levi shall bring the heave offering of the corn, of [a] the wine, and of the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

[a] Or, *the vintage*.

But the Priestly Code (see Lev. xxvii. 30-33; Num. xviii. 21-32) tithed cattle as well as vegetable produce (see Lev. xxvi. 32 f.), and this tithe went entirely to the Levites, who had to give one-tenth of what they received to the priests. In the present instance it will be seen that the D law is followed as regards what is tithed—vegetable produce alone; but in other respects the law in P is followed. Probably here and in xiii. 5 we are to recognize an intervening stage of custom between D and P.

38. to the chambers, into the treasure house: the latter (better rendered 'the place of the treasure') is simply an explanation of the former, **to the chambers** (or 'cells,' see on Ezra viii. 29) used to receive the tithe, &c., and also as dwellings for the priests.

39. heave offering: better 'contribution,' see on ver. 37. Here the term is general for firstfruits and tithes, as in Num. xviii. 24-28.

vessels: those used for holding the gifts in kind (tithe, &c.), not those spoken of in Ezra i. 7-11.

we will not forsake the house of our God: i. e. we will not neglect to pay our dues for the maintenance of the Temple officials and its services.

PART II (OF NEHEMIAH PROPER).

With ch. xi the narrative interrupted by the Ezra section vii. 73^b–x is resumed.

xi. 1 joins on immediately to vii. 4, though there is not sufficient reason to separate from the latter vii. 5–73^a.

The problem in vii. 4 is—how to fill the now well-defended

11 [N] And the princes of the people dwelt in Jerusalem:
the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten
to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts in
2 the *other* cities. And the people blessed all the men
that willingly offered themselves to dwell in Jerusalem.

capital? The walls are completed, there is room for a large population, but how can it be secured?

xi. 1 f. is what remains of a fuller text. The very conjunction 'and' implies probably (though as good Hebraists know not necessarily, since the '*waw* consecutive' tense came often to be a tense simple[1]) connexion with a lost clause which perhaps told of a second assembly held after that of vii. 5. In this assembly it was not improbably decided that princes, now living almost wholly in the country for purposes of agriculture, should transfer themselves to the capital, and that a tenth of the able men in the country should be chosen by lot to settle in Jerusalem along with the princes. Perhaps the decision to replenish the general population in the way indicated was reached after the princes had settled in Jerusalem.

1. princes: see on Ezra ix. 1.

the rest, &c.: render, 'but the rest,' &c., omitting **also.**

cast lots: see on x. 34.

one of ten, &c.: Berth. and Rawl. give many instances of similar methods being used to repopulate ancient cities (Rome, &c.).

the holy city: see ver. 18; Isa. xlviii. 2; Joel iii. 17; Dan. ix. 16, 24; cf. the modern name of Jerusalem, *El-Quds* = the holy one. Jerusalem is never so called in Chronicles, suggesting that the passage is free from his influence.

2. the men that willingly offered, &c.: i. e. those who of their own accord and for the 'good of the cause' volunteered to make their homes in the capital. Keil, Siegfried, and others hold that by these words the persons elected by lot are meant, but it can hardly be said that they 'willingly offered.'

In xi. 3–xii. 26 we have lists which have sorely taxed the ingenuity of learned commentators. Many recent scholars hold that these lists are due to the prolific imagination of the Chronicler: so Wellhausen, Meyer, and Bertholet. It is strange, however, if that be so, that this Chronicler did not make a better show of consistency, for the lists in verses 3–19 and 1 Chron. ix. 2–17 go back, no doubt, to one original, though differing a good deal in details and also in their context. Of course these differences are due in part, and it may be wholly, to the copyists.

[1] See on Ezra i. 1.

It is commonly assumed that as lists are frequently found in Chronicles, therefore the lists in Ezra and Nehemiah are also due to the Chronicler. But it seems to the present writer that the exile is a sufficient explanation of the large use made of genealogical registers after the return in 536 B.C. When the Southern Kingdom came to an end, and the flower of the nation was transported to Babylon, the national records, religious and political, would be removed to Babylon either by the Persian government or by the exiles themselves; see Introd. to Ezra ii. On their return such tables would be found of the greatest utility in the reconstitution and reorganization of the new community, and one need not be surprised that they are often referred to (Ezra ii; Neh. vii, x) and that others based on them were made.

To what period do the lists in xi. 3–36 belong? Three opinions have been defended.

1. The time before the exile. Smend[1] maintains that the country parts of Judah were occupied, as xi. 25 ff. implies, between the beginning of the exile (606) and the Maccabean age. A similar contention is made by Meyer, though in his case it is to argue from it to a late date for the list. In reply it is to be said that our knowledge of the period between Nehemiah and the Maccabees is far too slight to draw any dogmatic conclusions from it except within narrow limits. Moreover, there might well be a goodly number of Jewish families scattered about Judah for agricultural and pastoral purposes, all of them protected by the Persian government, and some of them perhaps descendants of Jews never removed to Babylon.

2. The time of Nehemiah: so the majority of commentators, including Keil, Ber.-Ryss., and Ryle.

No conclusive reasons have been given for rejecting this view, which is implied in the present arrangement of the Hebrew and English Bible, though the latter has in itself but little value. If we assume that these lists were put into the form implied in the greatly corrupted M.T. by or for Nehemiah, they have for basis the list (largely pre-exilic) in Ezra ii.

3. The time of the Chronicler. Wellhausen, Meyer, Bertholet, &c., hold that these lists are evidence of the state of things in the Chronicler's own time. They assume, of course, that this chapter is the Chronicler's own work, and, in fact, is based on 1 Chron. ix, and not the converse.

3–24 (except ver. 20). *Heads of Jewish and Benjammite families now resident in Jerusalem.* In vii (= Ezra ii) they represent clans or families.

In 1 Chron. ix. 3 mention is made in a general way of families belonging to Ephraim and Manasseh, though no names are given.

[1] *Lehrbuch*[1] 340 n.

3 [C_N] [a] Now these are the chiefs of the province that dwelt
in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one
in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests,
and the Levites, and the Nethinim, and the children of
4 Solomon's servants. And in Jerusalem dwelt certain
of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin.
Of the children of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah,
the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of
Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the children
5 of Perez; and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of
Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the
son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of the Shi-
6 lonite. All the sons of Perez that dwelt in Jerusalem
were four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.

[a] See 1 Chron. ix. 2, &c.

3-9. *Heads of lay families.*

3-6. *Judahites.*

3. chiefs: i. e. heads of houses (families). In 1 Chron. ix. 2 the word is by mistake 'first.' These had formerly lived on their country estate.

province: see on Ezra i, and cf. Neh. i. 3 f.

but in the cities of Judah, &c.: i. e. the bulk of those belonging to the Jewish community, lay and official, had their home in the provincial centres (cities, towns, and villages): see on Ezra x. 14.

Israel: i. e. laymen as distinguished from the Temple officials, priests, &c. See on Ezra x. 25.

Nethinim: see on Ezra ii. 43 ff.

children of Solomon's servants: see on Ezra ii. 58. They are absent from the list in 1 Chron. ix.

4. Athaiah: in 1 Chron. ix 'Uthai,' really one name. In Hebrew the resemblance in spelling is closer than in English.

Perez: see Gen. xxviii. 29.

5. Col-hozeh: see iii. 15.

the son of the Shilonite: read, 'the Shelanite,' from 'Shelah' (see Num. xxvi. 20). The word rendered 'son' (*ben*) means simply one of the class 'Shelanites.' It is Masseiah (1 Chron. ix, Asaiah) that is so called. 'Jeuel,' 'of the sons of Zerah' (Judah's third son), is added in 1 Chron. ix. 6.

6. four hundred threescore and eight: in 1 Chron. 'six hundred and ninety.'

And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of 7
Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah,
the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son
of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah. And after him Gabbai, 8
Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight. And Joel the 9
son of Zichri was their overseer: and Judah the son
of Hassenuah was second over the city. Of the priests: 10
Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, Seraiah the son of 11
Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the
son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house
of God, and their brethren that did the work of the house, 12

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valiant men: men able to engage in war.

7-9. *Benjamites.* In later times the tribe of Benjamin is lost in that of Judah: see on Ezra i. 5. The names in 1 Chron. differ considerably from those found here.

8. Read, 'And his clansmen (so *Luc.*, cf. verses 12, 13, 14) were mighty warriors, nine hundred and twenty-eight.' The changes in the Hebrew to produce the above are not great, **Gabbai, Sallai** being evidently a corruption of 'might warriors' (*Gibborē Khail*).

9. **overseer**: LXX *episcopos*, whence our 'bishop.' The Hebrew = 'one appointed over': so verses 14, 22; Esther ii. 3 (E.VV. 'officers').

10-24 (except 20). *Temple Officials.*

10-14. *Priests.*

10. For **son of Joiarib** read 'Joiarib'; so 1 Chron. ix. 10; cf. 1 Chron. xxiv. 7.

11. **Seraiah**: 1 Chron. ix. 11 'Azariah.' The designation 'ruler of the house of God' is attached to the latter name in 2 Chron. xxxi. 13; cf. 2 Kings xxv. 18. Probably an official of priestly standing charged with the general oversight of the Temple is intended.

ruler of the house of God: hardly the high-priest, as there were at the same time several officials so designated: see 2 Chron. xxxv. 8. If the high-priest is meant this 'Seraiah' might, as Bertheau suggests, be the ancestor of Ezra mentioned in Ezra vii. 1.

12. **and their brethren**: better, 'clansmen'.

that did, &c.: the words 'that did,' &c., describe the work of the priests mentioned in ver. 11 and their brother clansmen.

eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah,
13 and his brethren, chiefs of fathers' *houses*, two hundred forty and two: and Amashsai the son of Azarel, the son of
14 Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, and their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer was Zabdiel, [a] the son of
15 Haggedolim. And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah,
16 the son of Bunni; and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chiefs of the Levites, who had the oversight of the out-
17 ward business of the house of God; and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, who was the chief to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, and

[a] Or, *one of the great men*

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13. Amashsai: 1 Chron. ix. 12 'Maasai.'

14. their (brethren): read 'his' (with *Luc.* and LXX). 'Clansmen' is better than 'brethren.'

15–18. *Levites.*

16. Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chiefs of the Levites: the Levites had evidently several overseers: see ver. 22.

the outward business of the house: cf. on ver. 22 and see 1 Chron. xxvi. 29. Here the phrase denotes duties other than those connected with the worship and ritual of the Temple building proper, such as carving for the fabric, procuring the necessary supplies of wood, animals, &c., for food, sacrifice, &c., accepting gifts to the Temple and safeguarding them (Ezra viii. 33).

17. Zabdi: read (with *Luc.*, LXX) 'Zikri.'

the chief to begin: render (changing one consonant into another almost exactly like it), 'the leader of the Psalm-singing': so *Luc.*, LXX, Vulg.

the thanksgiving in prayer: render, 'offered thanks' ('praised,' see on Ezra iii. 11 and x. 1) 'during prayer.'

This inclusion of musicians among the Levites, usual in Chronicles, is not met with in the original sources of Ezra-Nehemiah (see p. 61). We have the same inclusion of singers among the Levites in ver. 22, xii. 8, 27, and in Ezra iii. 7. These parts are perhaps from the hand of the Chronicler, or they may have been worked over by him.

Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the
son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. All 18
the Levites in the holy city were two hundred fourscore
and four. Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their 19
brethren, that kept watch at the gates, were an hundred
seventy and two. And the residue of Israel, of the priests, 20
the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his
inheritance. But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel: and 21
Ziha and Gishpa were over the Nethinim. The overseer 22
also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of
Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the
son of Mica, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the
business of the house of God. For there was a com- 23

Bakbukiah: in 1 Chron. ix. 15 'Bakbakkar.'

the second: i. e. to Mathaniah.

brethren: better, 'clansmen.'

Jeduthun: named in the titles of Pss. xxxix, lxii, and lxxvii (see 1 Chron. xvi. 41). In 1 Chron. vi. 33-47, xv. 17, 19, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan are mentioned as the leading singers; but in 1 Chron. xvi. 41, xxv. 1 ff. Jeduthun takes the place of Ethan owing, it would appear, to a different tradition.

18. the holy city: see on xi. 1.

19. the porters. In the parallel passage (1 Chron. ix. 17 ff.) a long addition is made to the present verse, probably an interpolation.

the porters: see on Ezra ii. 43 ff.

20. This verse should immediately precede ver. 25, from which, probably by a copyist, it has been separated: see below.

21-24. *Notes concerning certain officials appointed by the king.*

21. Nethinim: see on Ezra ii. 43 ff.

Ophel: see on iii. 27.

22. overseer: see on ver. 16.

of the sons of Asaph: belonging to the guild of Asaphites. It cannot be proved that such a man as Asaph existed: see Psalms, vol. ii, p. 37 (*Century Bible*).

over the business of the house of God: i. e. over the liturgical services of the Temple. Uzzi's duties were therefore of a higher character than those of Shabbethai and Jozabad (ver. 16, see on).

23. The king saw to the regular support of the singers. See xii. 47, xiii. 5; Ezra vi. 8-10, vii. 20-24.

mandment from the king concerning them, and [a] a settled
24 provision for the singers, as every day required. And
Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the children of
Zerah the son of Judah, was at the king's hand in all
25 matters concerning the people. And for the villages,
with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt

[a] Or, *a sure ordinance concerning*

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the king: evidently Artaxerxes I: see ver. 24 and the above passages. This king took a special interest in the Temple service.

a settled provision: lit. 'something firm' (see on x. 1).

24. Pethahiah was evidently an official who acted between the king and the Jews, especially in matters affecting the psalmody of the house. **Zerah**: see on ver. 5.

at the king's hand: i. e. at the king's disposal to represent the king in the particular matters just spoken of. It does not mean that he was governor at Jerusalem, for we assume that Nehemiah held that position at the time under review.

This man's jurisdiction is often held (as by Siegfried) to extend to general Jewish affairs in Jerusalem, his superior residing at Samaria (Ezra iv. 8, 17). But it is exceedingly probable that Judah and Samaria were administered by separate governors: see on Ezra viii. 36.

20, 25-36. *Country parts of Judah outside Jerusalem inhabited by Jews.* See p. 254 (notes on verses 1 f. and on ver. 3).

We have here the same general divisions as in ver. 3 ff., viz. Judahites and Benjamites, laymen and Temple officials, only we seem to have but a torso of what was originally written. In these verses we have a list of the outlying places where the clans reside; in verses 3 f. of the heads of clans that settled in Jerusalem.

20. This verse forms a general introduction to verses 25-36, and belongs here.

the residue of: the same Hebrew word translated 'the rest of' in ver. 1. Here it means what remains when those settled in Jerusalem are taken from the Jewish community.

Israel: laymen; see on ver. 1.

25-30. *The Judahites.*

25. And for the villages, &c.: render, 'And as regards the estates with their fields,' &c. Ver. 20 tells us that those of the community that lived outside of Jerusalem dwelt on their several land properties ('possessions': E.VV. 'inheritance'). In ver. 25 the writer passes on to remark that as regards these estates and the adjoining lands 'some Judahites dwelt in,' &c. See Lev. xxv. 31 ('the houses of the wall-less villages shall be counted as belonging to the country fields,' &c.).

in Kiriath-arba and the [a] towns thereof, and in Dibon and the [a] towns thereof, and in Jekabzeel and the villages thereof; and in Jeshua, and in Moladah, and Beth-pelet; 26
and in Hazar-shual, and in Beer-sheba and the [a] towns 27
thereof; and in Ziklag, and in Meconah and in the 28
[a] towns thereof; and in En-rimmon, and in Zorah, and in 29
Jarmuth; Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish 30
and the fields thereof, Azekah and the [a] towns thereof.
So they encamped from Beer-sheba unto the valley of

[a] Heb. *daughters*.

villages: lit. 'enclosures': then abode. Here the word denotes in general the various settlements in Judah.

Kiriath-arba: according to Judges i. 10 the older name of Hebron: see Gen. xxiii. 2 (P); Joshua xiv. 15. But if this is the older name, why is it used here?

and the towns thereof: lit. 'and its daughters,' the regular phrase for 'and its dependent places' (cities, towns, or villages).

Dibon . . . Jekabzeel: usually identified with *Dimonah* and *Kabzeel* (Joshua xv. 21 f.).

26. Jeshua: nowhere else mentioned in the O. T.

Moladah: see Joshua xv. 26. Not yet identified.

Beth-pelet: see Num. x. 26; Joshua xv. 27. Hitherto not identified.

Hazar-shual . . . Beersheba: see Joshua xv. 28, &c. The latter is now called *Bîr es-Seba'a*.

28. Ziklag: see Joshua xv. 31; 1 Sam. xxx. i.

Meconah: named nowhere else in the O. T. Probably = the modern *Mekenna*, twelve miles north-west of *Beit Jibrin*.

29. En-rimmon: see Joshua xv. 32, xix. 7; 1 Chron. iv. 32, where in the LXX (best codd.) the same reading is implied. The M.T. of the passages cited assumes two places, 'Ain' ('En') and 'Rimmon.'

Zorah: see Joshua xv. 33. **Jarmuth**: see Joshua xv. 35.

30. Zanoah: see Joshua xv. 34 = the modern *Zanû'a*, two and a half miles south of Beth Shemesh.

Adullam . . . Azekah: see Joshua xv. 35.

Lachish (see Joshua xv. 39, &c., &c.) = the modern *Tell-el-Hesy* (or *Umm Lakis*?[1]). An important Amorite city.

from Beer-sheba (in the extreme south of the land) **to the valley of Hinnom** (in the extreme north of Judah).

[1] So Robinson. But the modern *Umm Lakish* more probably occupies the site of a city founded by a colony from Lakish (= Lachish). Professor Sayce, however, tells me that *Umm Lakish* (which the natives now call *Laṭish*) is a Roman village.

31 Hinnom. The children of Benjamin also *dwelt* from
Geba *onward*, at Michmash and Aija, and at Beth-el and
32, 33 the [a] towns thereof; at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah; Hazor,
34, 35 Ramah, Gittaim; Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat; Lod, and
36 Ono, [b] the valley of craftsmen. And of the Levites,
certain courses in Judah *were joined* to Benjamin.

[a] Heb. *daughters.* [b] Or, *Gehaharashim* See 1 Chron. iv. 14.

31-35. *The Benjamites.*

31. from Geba onward: read, 'at Geba,' changing one consonant.

Geba: see on Ezra ii. 26.

Michmash: see on Ezra ii. 27.

For **Aija** (=Ai) and **Bethel** see on Ezra ii. 28.

32. Anathoth: see on Ezra ii. 23.

Nob: a priest's city quite close to Jerusalem, but as yet unidentified: see 1 Sam. xxi. 1, xxii. 9, 11, 19, &c.

Ananiah: nowhere else referred to in the O.T. Commonly identified with *Beit Hannina*, a village two miles to the north of Jerusalem.

33. Hazor: probably = the modern *Khurbet Hassûr*, a little north of Jerusalem, quite close to the last-named place.

Ramah: see on Ezra ii. 26.

Gittaim: mentioned only here. Its exact position is unknown.

34. Hadid: see on Ezra ii. 33.

Zeboim: not identified and nowhere else named; but cf. 1 Sam. xiii. 18 ('the valley of Zeboim').

Neballat = the modern *Beit Nebâla*, about four miles north-east of Lydda. Nowhere else mentioned.

35. Lod . . . Ono: see on Ezra ii. 33.

the valley of craftsmen: on the road between Jerusalem and Jaffa: see 1 Chron. iv. 14, where the A.V. and R.V. treat the words as a proper name, *Ge-harashim*. The valley had its name probably from the large number of craftsmen who dwelt in it.

36. Render (with *Luc.*), 'And some of the Levites' (who did not live at Jerusalem) 'were in Judah and (some) in Benjamin': i.e. the non-Jerusalem Levites were distributed in Judah and Benjamin. The meaning of the M.T. is, 'some Levites who in former times had been attached to Judah, now had their homes in Benjamin.'

XII. 1-26. Various Lists of Priests and Levites.

We have in this section a collection of separate lists which appear to have been kept in the Temple archives, and the placing of which here was suggested by the list in xi. 2 ff. Torrey is

[T_R] Now these are the priests and the Levites that 12
went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua:
Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra; Amariah, Malluch, Hattush; 2
Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth; Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah; 3, 4

very sure that every word of ch. xii is by the Chronicler[1], but if so, it is quite inexplicable that he should set side by side lists which are obviously incomplete and even inconsistent. We have here lists which in an older form are old and original, but they have been edited and connecting passages inserted, probably by different hands and at different times. In verses 11 and 22 Jaddua, who flourished about 330 B. C., is mentioned, and in ver. 26 the time of Ezra and Nehemiah is looked back to as belonging to the distant past. These lists present many difficulties, chronological and otherwise. If Hashabiah and Sherebiah (ver. 24) were contemporaries of Joiakim, son of Jeshua, and also of Ezra (Ezra viii. 18 f., 24), then Ezra and Joiakim must have lived about the same time, which is exceedingly unlikely, for Jeshua's son could hardly have been high-priest in 458 B. C.

In verses 1–7 we have virtually the same names assigned to the time of Jeshua which verses 12–21 connect with Jeshua's son Joiakim, and which in x. 1 ff. are apparently referred to the time of Ezra. This, however, should not occasion any insuperable difficulty, for in each case the names of houses remain essentially unchanged, though the unnamed individuals who represented them would necessarily vary.

In verses 8 f., 24 f. the singers seem (though not by name) to be included among the Levites, as are the porters in ver. 25—a sign of late date (see p. 61 and on xi. 17).

1–9. *Priestly and Levitical houses at the time of the return under Zerubbabel and Jeshua.* The lists in these verses differ considerably from the corresponding lists in Ezra ii (= Neh. vii); perhaps because the reference is here to corresponding houses as they existed in Nehemiah's day.

1–7. *Priestly houses*: see x. 3–9, Ezra ii. 2.

2. Malluch: in ver. 14 'Malluchi.'

Hattush: not in ver. 12 ff.

3. Shecaniah: in ver. 14 'Shebaniah' through confusion of two similarly written letters. The first form occurs in 1 Chron. xxiv. 11 and in the Greek versions (LXX and *Luc.*) of ver. 14. But in x. 4 we have 'Shebaniah.'

Rehum: in ver. 15 'Harim,' which is more correct (see x. 6 and Ezra ii. 39). The consonants are identical in both cases, though differently arranged.

4. Ginnethoi: in ver. 16 'Ginnethon,' as in x. 3.

[1] *Composition*, &c. p. 43.

5, 6 Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah; Shemaiah, and Joiarib,
7 Jedaiah; Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These were
the chiefs of the priests and of their brethren in the
8 days of Jeshua. Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui,
Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah, which was
9 over [a] the thanksgiving, he and his brethren. Also Bak-
bukiah and Unno, their brethren, were over against them
10 in wards. And Jeshua begat Joiakim, and Joiakim begat
11 Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada, and Joiada begat
12 Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua. And in the days

[a] Or, *the choirs*

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5. Mijamin: in ver. 16 'Miniamin.'

Maadiah: in ver. 17 'Moadiah,' the correct form being probably as *Luc.* and x. 8 'Maaziah.'

7. Sallu: in ver. 20 'Sallai.'

8 f. *Levites*: see Ezra ii. 40–42.

8. Binnui: so x. 10; in viii. 7 and ix. 4 'Bani.'

Kadmiel, Sherebiah: see viii. 7, ix. 4, x. 10, 13.

which was over the thanksgiving, i. e. who had charge of the singing, the reference being to Mattaniah only (see xi. 17). The marginal reading 'the choirs' is an error based on the mistaken spelling of the Hebrew word.

9. were over against them, i. e. stood opposite to them and sang in turns with them, i. e. antiphonally (see ver. 24, 2 Chron. vii. 7, and cf. Psalms, vol. ii (*Century Bible*), pp. 26, 236, 245, 288).

in wards: render, 'in (their) watches' (see ver. 24, 1 Chron. xxvi. 16). The word denotes the 'bands' or 'courses' of Levites who in their turns functioned in the Temple.

10 f. *The high-priests.*

10. Jeshua: see on Ezra ii. 2.

Joiakim: it would seem (see verses 12, 26) that under his superintendence a register of priests and Levites was made.

Eliashib (see iii. 1 and on Ezra x. 6) and **Joiada** (see xiii. 28) were Nehemiah's contemporaries.

11. Jonathan: read 'John,' and see on ver. 22 and on Ezra x. 6.

Jaddua: no doubt the high-priest mentioned by Josephus as going to meet Alexander the Great to appease his wrath as the great conqueror was approaching Jerusalem [1]. Though the incident related by Josephus is unhistorical, it would appear to show that Jaddua lived about 334 B. C. (see on Ezra x. 6).

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[1] *Antiq.* xi. 7, 12 and 8, 4 f.

of Joiakim were priests, heads of fathers' *houses*: of
Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; of Ezra, 13
Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; of [a] Malluchi, Jona- 14
than; of Shebaniah, Joseph; of Harim, Adna; of 15
Meraioth, Helkai; of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, 16
Meshullam; of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, 17
Piltai; of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; 18
and of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; of Sallai, 19, 20
Kallai; of Amok, Eber; of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of 21
Jedaiah, Nethanel. The Levites in the days of Eliashib, 22
Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded heads
of fathers' *houses*: also the priests, [b] in the reign of
Darius the Persian. The sons of Levi, heads of fathers' 23
houses, were written in the book of the chronicles, even

[a] Another reading is, *Melicu*. [b] Or, *to*

12-21. *Heads of priestly houses in the time of Joiakim* (*circa* 499-463 B. C.). For the differences in names see on verses 1-7.

17. of Miniamin: the name of the head of this house has fallen out. Read 'of Miniamin . . .'

22-26. *Heads of Levitical houses with sundry short notices.*

22. The text of this verse is obviously corrupt, but the sense is evidently, that during the high-priesthood of the four men named a register of heads of priestly and Levitical houses was kept. One might (making two very trivial textual changes) read, 'Of the Levites in the days of Eliashib . . . were recorded the heads of fathers' (houses) as also of the priests until the reign of,' &c.

in the reign: read, 'until the reign.' Guthe and Bertholet are wrong when they adduce the Greek and Latin version for this change (one letter only), for they have all (including *Luc.*, *en*) evidently followed the LXX, as does the Syr., showing that the corruption is old.

Darius the Persian, i. e. Darius Codomannus (336-331). His being called **the Persian** is often, since Ewald, held to suggest a date for this paragraph at least subsequent to the cessation of the Persian rule, though Winckler denies this: see p. 19 f., and on Ezra i. 1.

23. Render, 'Of the Levites the heads of,' &c.

sons of Levi = Levites. Cf. 'sons of Israel' = 'Israelites' (see on Ezra vi. 9).

book of the chronicles: lit. 'things of the days,' i. e. 'daily records,' the Hebrew name of our books of Chronicles. As the

24 until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. And the
chiefs of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua
the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them,
to praise and give thanks, according to the commandment
25 of David the man of God, ward against ward. Mattaniah,

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expression is a common one for official records, one must not hastily conclude that the canonical books of Chronicles are here cited, though of course nothing in the words forbids that interpretation.

until the days of Johanan: this would seem to show that the records in question were completed during John's tenure of the office of high-priest, *circa* 380. The whole of the Persian period would seem to have been embraced in these records.

son (i. e. grandson) **of Eliashib:** see on Ezra v. 1, vii. 1–5, and viii. 2.

24 f. *Levitical chiefs.* Perhaps the names in these verses are from the 'annals' (chronicles) mentioned in ver. 23, for they extend to a later date than Joiakim's (v. 12).

24. Jeshua the son of Kadmiel: read (making very trivial changes which *Luc.* and LXX favour), 'Jeshua, Binnui, and Kadmiel' (see ver. 8 and x. 10). Jeshua was the son of Jozadak or Jehozadak (see Ezra iii. 2, 8).

over against them: see on ver. 1. Probably the responding parties in the antiphonal singing were arranged opposite each other.

to praise: the root of the verb occurs in 'Hallelujah,' lit. 'praise Yah.'

and give thanks: see on Ezra x. 1. Referring to the subject-matter, not the form of the singing.

according to the commandment of David: see 1 Chron. xvi. 4 ff., xxv, &c. The tradition of David as the great organizer of Temple music is fully developed in Chronicles (say 300 B. C.), but it must have taken time to grow and become a part of the national belief: see on Ezra iii. 10.

the man of God: see ver. 36 and 2 Chron. viii. 14; cf. the title to Ps. xviii. It is impossible to say for certain whether the present passage or that in Chronicles is the earlier, but one seems dependent on the other.

ward against ward: see on ver. 9. We are not told in Ezra-Nehemiah into how many courses David divided the priests and Levites, but according to Chronicles the number was twenty-four in each case (see 1 Chron. xxiv f.). We seem in the present book to have the tradition of David the musician in its earlier and simpler form.

25. xi. 17 shows that the three first names belong to the list

and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters keeping the ward at the storehouses of the 26
gates. These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest the scribe.

in ver. 24. The names of the **porters** ('gatekeepers,' see on Ezra ii. 42) begin with Meshullam.

keeping the ward, &c.: render, 'keeping watch over the storerooms at (i. e. near) the gates' (of the Temple area).

27–43. The Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem.

The presence of the 'I' in verses 31, 38, 40 shows that we have to do here with the Nehemiah memoirs, though what Nehemiah wrote about the dedication has been worked over by later editors —the Chroniclers perhaps. The words 'they sought' in ver. 27 prove nothing however, though they are constantly quoted by even the latest critics to prove that the writer is not Nehemiah; 'the Levites were sought' is equally possible according to the Hebrew (see on Ezra x. 17).

Of course there are here many features, words, and expressions which abound in Chronicles, as in verses 35 f., 41, &c., but it is impossible to pronounce finally when these features arose in Hebrew literature.

In 'Chronicles' we have the close of or at least a late stage in a long course of evolution in Hebrew thought, usage, and style of language. We cannot separate ver. 30 from ver. 31, nor verses 37, 39 f. from ver. 38, so that verses 31 f., 37–40 can be proved to be by Nehemiah, and are accepted as such by Ryssel (in Kautzsch), Siegfried and Bertholet. Ewald [1] and Stade [2] are no doubt right in recognizing in verses 27–43 a genuine extract from the Nehemiah memoirs, though later editors have been at work on these verses.

The musical references in this chapter are commonly fathered on the Chronicler, but it is time to acknowledge that everything of the kind did not first come into existence in the time of the Chronicler. The fact that in his time they were in full career implies a previous period of development: see p. 16 f.

Date of the Dedication of the Walls.

It is exceedingly likely that the walls were dedicated almost immediately after they were completed, as Stade [3], Bertholet, and most recent critics hold. But Rawlinson [4] and Klostermann [5] maintain

[1] *Gesch.*[3] iv. 205, A 3. [2] *Gesch.* ii. 176. [3] *Gesch.* ii. 175.
[4] On xii. 27. [5] *Gesch.* 265 f.

27 [C_N] And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals,
28 psalteries, and with harps. And the sons of the singers

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that the dedication took place some twelve years after their completion, i. e. after Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem in 432. The close connexion of verses 27–43 with the next chapter and the personal allusion in xiii. 6 are said to require this late date. Moreover, Nehemiah's return has been explained as due to his desire to have the king's approval for the ceremony of the dedication.

But one is allowed to deny the cogency of this reasoning, which is based mainly on subjective considerations. The walls were finished in vi. 16, and (removing vii. 73^b–x to the close of Ezra) the intervening events do not require more than a few months. One may perhaps infer from 2 Macc. i. 18 that Nehemiah was at that time (say 80 B. C.) supposed to have dedicated the walls on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month (Kislew). Now according to Neh. vi. 15 the walls were completed on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month (Elul). It is not unreasonable to think that exactly three months after their completion the walls were dedicated.

27–30. *Gathering of musicians.* The priests and Levites purify themselves, the people, and the city.

27. dedication: Heb. *khenuka*, a late word, non-occurrent in pre-exilic literature, though the cognate verb occurs in Deut. xx. 5, and in 1 Kings viii. 63. Cf. the proper name 'Enoch' (Heb. *Khănok* = dedicated?) in Gen. iv. 17 f. (J), &c.: and see on Ezra vi. 16.

they sought: better use the passive, 'the Levites were sought,' &c. In Hebrew it is the impersonal construction (see p. 103).

By the **Levites** in this verse we are to understand one division only of them, viz. the singers (see p. 61).

with gladness: a rendering (supported by *Luc.*) involving a slight change in the text.

thanksgivings (see on Ezra iii. 11, x. 1) . . . **singing**: these two terms express respectively the theme and (lyrical) form of the words used. Pss. cxxii, cxlvii have been suggested.

psalteries . . . harps: better, 'harps . . . lyres' (see Psalms, vol. ii (*Century Bible*), p. 28). For the instruments named see 1 Chron. xiii. 8.

28. Render, 'And the Levites (so *Luc.*, Guthe, and ? Bertholet) and the singers gathered themselves together, from the plain of the Jordan and from round about Jerusalem,' &c.

sons of the singers: render, 'singers' (see on Ezra ii. 41).

gathered themselves together, both out of the [a] plain round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of the Netophathites; also from Beth-gilgal, and out of the fields 29
of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem. And the priests 30
and the Levites purified themselves; and they purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. Then I brought 31

[a] Or, *Circuit*

In Hebrew the words rendered 'son' and 'sons' denote one or more of a specified class. Thus 'a son of man (*Adam*)' = 'a man,' 'sons of man' (or 'men') = 'men.' In Syriac 'son of man' is almost invariably used for 'man.'

These singers are identical with the Levites (see the rendering above and ver. 27).

both: the Heb. word (*waw*) is that usually translated 'and,' and should (with *Luc.*) be placed immediately before 'round about,' &c., as the sense requires (see rendering above).

plain: the Heb. word (*kikkar*, lit. 'circuit') is the technical term for the district around the lower Jordan. There is no difficulty here or in iii. 22 (see on) arising out of the distance, for the Jordan is only some twenty-two English miles from Jerusalem.

Netophathites: men from Netophah (see on Ezra ii. 22).

29. Beth-gilgal: nowhere else mentioned. Since *beth* (lit. 'house') means often 'place,' 'situation,' we are probably to understand 'the neighbourhood of Gilgal'; cf. '**fields**' (='**open country**') '**of Geba**' (see on Ezra ii. 26).

Azmaveth: see on Ezra ii. 24.

30. the priests and the Levites: the post-exilic usage; cf. 'the priests the Levites' in D.

purified themselves: by sprinkling on themselves sacrificial blood (see 2 Chron. xxix. 20-24; Ezek. xliii. 19; cf. Ezra vi. 10). Priests, Levites, people, gates, and wall had all to undergo the same ceremony of purification, as all were to be used in holy service. Of course it is ritual purification, that is meant, a conception brought out very prominently in Lev. xvii–xxvi (H) and Ezek. xl–xlviii.

31–43. *The procession around the walls.* The company of priests and Levites and princes formed themselves into two companies near the Valley Gate, one proceeding towards the right along the southern and eastern wall, the other to the left along the western and northern wall, the two companies meeting in an open space east of the Temple.

31–37. *Procession of the right-hand party.* Where was the

up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies that gave thanks and went in pro-

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general rendezvous whence the two bands started their circuit of the walls? We are not told, but the context makes it extremely likely that it was some point near the Valley Gate (see on ii. 13) as Stade surmised[1]. It was from this gate that Nehemiah commenced his tour of inspection (see ii. 13), and this might have suggested the starting-point of the present dedicatory procession.

The course of the procession was as follows:—

1. The Valley Gate (?).
2. Southward (ver. 31).
3. After reaching the southernmost point a turn was made to the west and the journey continued to the Dung Gate, which was a little to the north (v. 31).
4. From the Dung Gate the Fountain Gate was reached (ver. 37), from which point, instead of following the direction of the wall, a march almost direct northward seems to have been made, perhaps because henceforward the road along the wall was too narrow to hold the company, or because the tour round would require too much time to allow of the meeting of the parties at the place arranged (ver. 37).
5. Taking the direct way to the north ('straight before them,' ver. 37), they go as far as the Water Gate, ascending the steps leading across Ophel to the city. The processioning companies seem to have come together at the Guard Gate (see on ver. 39).

31. princes (i. e. leaders) **of Judah**: see on Ezra ix. 1.

upon (the wall): so the compound preposition is rightly rendered here (as in 2 Chron. xiii. 4; Jonah iv. 6); thus Keil, Reuss, Rawl., Oettli, Meinhold, Ryle.

But Siegfried and Bertholet hold that the right rendering is 'beyond' or 'above' the wall, i. e. at a point higher than the wall but not on it.

companies . . . right hand: render, 'companies' (M.T. 'thanksgivings'), 'and the first went to the right hand,' &c. A change in the Heb. of two words (one occurring nowhere else and certainly corrupt) is all that is necessary for this rendering.

companies that gave thanks: the one Heb. word so rendered is translated everywhere except in this chapter 'thanksgiving,' 'praise,' and the like (see on Ezra iii. 11 and x. 1 for the verb); but as 'appointed two thanksgivings' gives no sense most ancient and modern translators have assumed without reason that in this section the noun means a 'company giving thanks.' The present writer thinks the text is wrong, and that instead of *tōdōt*

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[1] *Gesch.* ii. 175.

cession; *whereof one went* on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate: and after them went Hoshaiah, 32
and half of the princes of Judah, and Azariah, Ezra, 33
and Meshullam, Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and 34

(thanksgivings) we should read *ʿēdōt* (companies), the word used of the company of Korah (Num. xxvi. 9, xxvii. 3); of Job's circle of dependants (Job xvi. 7), and especially of the congregation of Israel (lit. 'a company assembled by appointment'). Any Hebraist will see how easily the two words could be confounded. The Syr. seems to follow the text now for the first time restored, for it translates by *kenushata* = 'companies.'

and went in procession: the one Heb. word here used occurs nowhere else. Read (making a slight change), 'and the one (or the first) went' (on the right hand). There is then no need for italics.

right hand: i. e. the south (see 1 Sam. xxiii. 24). The Hebrews named the four quarters of the heavens according to the position of one gazing to the east (a survival, perhaps, of sun-worship). Thus left hand = north (Joshua xix. 27, &c.), the front = east, and the hinder part = west (see Isa. ix. 11).

But they named these also on other principles. Thus the east is often called the direction of sun-rising (*mizrakh*), the west the 'sea' (because the Mediterranean was west of Palestine), the south *darom* (= ?), and *Negeb*, the dry (i. e. sunny) part, the north having usually the designation *ṣāphōn*, 'the hidden' (from the light of the sun) 'part.'

dung gate: see on ii. 13.

32. (after) **them:** i. e. the musicians.

Hoshaiah: we know nothing further of him, though he appears as the leader of the princes in this company, as Nehemiah was in the other company, another illustration of the defective state of our knowledge of the period. Perhaps, however, we are to think of a house so called and not of one man.

33. and Azariah . . . Jeremiah: these seven names represent priestly houses corresponding to the seven priestly houses in the other company (see ver. 41). The text has fallen into some confusion. So Guthe, Bertholet. Princes' houses are not mentioned.

Azariah . . . Meshullam: mentioned among the priestly houses which signed the covenant (see x. 3, 8).

Ezra: a house or family so called (see verses 1, 13; cf. x. 2).

34. Judah . . . Benjamin: these tribal names stand here for houses. Bertholet regards the occurrence of these names as a proof of the unhistorical character of the whole list.

Shemaiah: see ver. 6.

35 Jeremiah, and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets:
Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the
son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zaccur,
36 the son of Asaph; and his brethren, Shemaiah, and
Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, and Judah,
Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man
37 of God; and Ezra the scribe was before them: and by
the fountain gate, and straight before them, they went up
by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the

Jeremiah: see verses 1, 13 and x. 3.

35. priests' sons: render 'priests,' and see on ver. 28. We have the names of these priestly houses in verses 33 f. (see on ver. 34).

with trumpets: see on Ezra iii. 10.

Zechariah: here, as being Asaphite, the clan cannot be priestly as one of the same name in the other company is (see ver. 41). See on ver. 34.

36. Milalai: we should probably (with *Luc.*) omit this name as a dittograph of Gilalai (more alike in Hebrew than in English). We then get eight Asaphite names, as in the other company (ver. 42).

with the musical instruments to the end of the verse is thought by Meyer[1], Siegfried, and Bertholet to be an addition by the Chronicler, who out of respect to Ezra (though he is not once mentioned in 'Chronicles') gives him here an important position. Certainly the introduction of Ezra's name here is unhistorical, if the individual is meant, and in any case the rôle assigned to Ezra here has been already alloted to Hoshaiah (ver. 32). A late editor, living at a time when Ezra came to be regarded as the second Moses, desired to give him a position in this company similar to that of Nehemiah in the party of the left hand. The man Ezra nowhere appears in the present context.

David the man of God: see ver. 24.

37. fountain gate: see on ii. 15.

straight before them: instead of following the course of the walls the procession now strikes a path due north, though for what reason we are not told (see p. 270).

stairs, &c.: see on iii. 15.

city of David: see on iii. 15.

at the going up, &c.: at a part of the wall that covered an elevation of ground.

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[1] *Die Entstehung,* &c., p. 200.

wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward. And the other company of them that gave 38
thanks went to meet them, and I after them, with the half of the people, upon the wall, above the tower of the furnaces, even unto the broad wall; and above the 39
gate of Ephraim, and by the old gate, and by the fish gate, and the tower of Hananel, and the tower of [a] Ham-

[a] Or, *The hundred*

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above the house of David: i. e. the traditional site, some ruins of which were then perhaps to be seen. It is possible that some well-known private house had this name.

The party leaves the wall at the ascent referred to, passing northwards by the site of the royal palace. Kent denies that the procession left the wall at all until the other company was reached; but he depends for proof on notions of Jerusalem topography which are now universally discarded.

above (the house, &c.): we have here in Hebrew the same combination of prepositions as that rendered 'upon' in ver. 31 (see on).

38–43. *Procession of the left-hand (northern) party.*

38. company of them that gave thanks: read 'company,' and see on ver. 31.

went: follows a slightly but rightly corrected text.

to meet them: read (making a small change) 'on the left' (=to the north: see on ver. 31). The Hebrew word in the M.T. is in its present form a monstrosity, and has no meaning.

with the half of the people: i. e. as many princes, priests, and Levites as belonged to the right-hand party (see 32 ff.). There is not the slightest need (with Guthe, Bertholet, and Löhr) to read 'with the half of the princes of the people.' The half extends here to all the classes enumerated in 32 ff.

above: i. e. some distance from; the same double preposition translated 'upon' in ver. 31 (see on).

tower of the furnaces: see on iii. 11.

broad wall: see on iii. 8.

39. gate of Ephraim: see on iii. 6. As it is not mentioned in Nehemiah's tour of inspection the word **above** (the gate, &c.) implies probably that this gate did not lie in line with the wall here spoken of, but some distance to the south.

the old gate: see on iii. 6.

fish gate: see on iii. 3.

tower of Hananel . . . tower of Hammeah . . . sheep gate: see on iii. 1.

meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in
40 the gate of the guard. So stood the two companies of
them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and
41 the half of the [a] rulers with me: and the priests, Eliakim,
Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and
42 Hananiah, with trumpets; and Maaseiah, and Shemaiah,
and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah,
and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with
43 Jezrahiah their overseer. And they offered great sacrifices that day, and rejoiced; for God had made them
rejoice with great joy; and the women also and the
children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard
even afar off.

[a] Or, *deputies*

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stood still: better, 'entered': see on Ezra iii. 10; cf. next verse.

gate of the guard: better, 'prison gate.' This cannot be the wall gate leading directly into the guard court (see on iii. 25), for that would fix it too much to the south. Probably we are to understand the "gate of Hammephkad' (see on iii. 31), i. e. the gate opposite to the prison, and it is likely that the original Hebrew text read accordingly, the beginning of both names being identical. The Hebrew word has come into the present text through the influence of iii. 25.

40. stood: see on ver. 39. The two bands entered the Prison Gate and formed one company in the Temple area.

companies of them that gave thanks: read 'companies,' and see on ver. 31.

in the house of God: to be attached to the preceding verb 'entered' (E.VV. **stood**).

In verses 40–42 we have the same order as in the description of the procession of the right-hand (south) party: (1) The musicians, (2) Nehemiah and half the rulers, (3) Priests, (4) Levites.

41. with trumpets: see on Ezra iii. 10.

42. sang loud: lit., 'caused (those round about) to hear': see 1 Chron. xv. 19.

43. great sacrifices: see Ezra vi. 17.

God had made them rejoice: see viii. 12, 17; Ezra vi. 22; 2 Chron. xx. 27.

women . . . children: see viii. 2, x. 29.

joy: i. e. its manifestation.

afar off: see Ezra iii. 13.

And on that day were men appointed over the 44
chambers for the treasures, for the heave offerings, for
the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them,
according to the fields of the cities, the portions [a] appointed
by the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced
for the priests and for the Levites that [b] waited. And they 45

[a] Heb. *of the law.* [b] Heb. *stood.*

44-47. Provision for the Support of the Temple Officials.

This section bears in a special degree the marks of late editing, as do the following three verses, and Kosters, Torrey, Meyer, and Bertholet have no hesitation in ascribing ver. 44–xiii. 3 to the Chronicler as a kind of historical support for xiii. 4 ff., 10 ff.; see especially ver. 47.

44. Those appointed over the treasure chambers in this verse had to see that the Temple dues brought were safely housed, whereas the 'treasurers' in xiii. 13 were to preside over the distribution of what was brought.

chambers, or 'cells': see on iii. 30 and Ezra viii. 29. **treasures** (= stores) and **heave offerings** seem both general terms, the second restricting the first to such as were sacred offerings, and the latter being further defined as 'firstfruits,' &c.

heave offerings: better 'sacred gifts' or 'contributions': see on x. 37.

firstfruits: see x. 38, where the same Hebrew word occurs, and on x. 37, where another Hebrew word ('first ripe fruits'), often similarly translated, is found.

tithes: see on x. 37 f.

according to the fields, &c.: the gifts were sorted in the chambers according to the localities which supplied them. The Versions and many MSS. read 'according to the princes,' &c.

the portions: see ver. 47. The Hebrew word is written rather peculiarly, but no difference is meant, and the variations of spelling are explainable.

Judah rejoiced: a very naïve remark if (as seems likely) we are to see here the hand of a priest.

that waited: lit. 'that stood': see 1 Chron. vi. 32 f. (Heb., verses 17 f.), and for the full phrase 'to stand before Yahweh' (= 'to serve') see Deut. x. 8. It is generally used of the priests when performing their duties in the Temple. Cf. Milton's

'They also serve who stand and wait.'

('On his Blindness.')

45. See 2 Chron. xiii. 11. Render, 'And they took charge of the service of their God and of the purification,' &c.

kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, and *so did* the singers and the porters, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son.
46 For in the days of David and Asaph of old [a] there was a chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanks-
47 giving unto God. And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, as every day required: and they sanctified for the Levites; and the Levites sanctified for the sons of Aaron.

[a] Another reading is, *there were chiefs.*

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kept the ward: lit. 'they kept the thing to be kept.' The verb has often the meaning 'to discharge the duties of an office,' especially of the priesthood: see Num. iii. 10, xviii. 7, &c. Hence the verb with its cognate noun, as here, Lev. viii. 35, &c., means simply to perform the duties entrusted to them as priests, Levites, &c.

purification: see 1 Chron. xxiii. 28.

according to the commandment of David and of Solomon: see 1 Chron. xxiii–xxvi; 2 Chron. viii. 14.

46. Render, 'For in the days of David Asaph in the olden time was chief,' &c.

and (Asaph): omit with the Greek (both LXX and *Luc*), Syriac, and Vulgate versions and one Hebrew Cod. The two time references seem redundant. Bertholet renders, 'For in the days of David and Asaph the chiefs (adding the consonant) of the singers were appointed (inserting one letter in the Hebrew word rendered **of old**) (with reference to) the songs of praise,' &c. But with the changes he proposes the last part of the verse hangs in the air, 'and songs,' &c.

For **chief** the *qr*, Vulg., and many MSS. read the plural 'chiefs.'

47. The editor wishes to make it quite plain that from the time of Zerubbabel to that of Nehemiah the Temple dues were paid.

sanctified: i.e. set apart: see Luke xxvii. 14, 16 ff.; 1 Chron. xxvi. 27.

sons of Aaron: i.e. Aaronites, P's word for the priests proper as distinct from the Levites. Ezekiel's term is 'Zadokites' (or sons of Zadok).

[U] On that day they read in the book of Moses in 13
the audience of the people; and therein was found
written, that an Ammonite and a Moabite should not

XIII. For general remarks as to the relation of this chapter to ch. x see pp. 242 ff.

1–3. *Exclusion of the mixed multitude.*

This section supplies an excellent introduction to verses 4–9, and, whether or not by Nehemiah, was placed where it is because it refers to the law which was Nehemiah's authority in excluding Tobiah (the Ammonite) from the Temple chamber.

Many would remove these three verses from their present setting. W. Robertson Smith [1], followed essentially by Geissler [2], and at one time by Bertholet [3], would insert verses 1 f. between Ezra ix. 9 and 10, or thereabouts. Kosters thought verses 1–3 should introduce Neh. ix f., while Marquart would join the whole of xiii to Ezra ix f. But one may expect the law to have been read by other leaders than Ezra, and, indeed, as often as the conduct of the people called for special reference to its requirements. There is surely no necessity to think that the evil of mixed marriages was dealt with on only one or two special occasions in the life of Ezra and Nehemiah. Moreover, the steps which are now taken differ from anything previously done, and the Scripture referred to is also different. The walls had been dedicated and certain regulations made for the support of the clergy of all grades (xii. 44–47)—what more natural than to set about the purification of the community from all non-Jewish elements?

If we are to remove verses 1–3, the most suitable place for them next to their present one is after ver. 9, so that Nehemiah's treatment of Tobiah would supply the occasion for the course described in ver. 3. The words 'before this,' &c., might have been inserted after verses 1–3 got to be where they are.

1. On that day: the reference is general, as in xii. 44, unless verses 1–3 are placed after ver. 9, in which case the day when Nehemiah excluded Tobiah will be meant.

in the book of Moses: see on viii. 1.

found written: i. e. in Deut. xxiii. 3–5. Note the large use made in Ezra-Nehemiah of Deuteronomy.

Ammonite: Tobiah (see verses 4 ff.) was an Ammonite: see on ii. 10.

Moabite: Bertholet thinks that Sanballat was a Moabite and that he is in the writer's mind here. But it is unlikely that he was a Moabite at all. See on ii. 10.

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[1] *OTJC.*(2) 427, n 2. [2] p. 45. [3] On Deut. xxiii. 4–7.

2 enter into the assembly of God for ever; because they
met not the children of Israel with bread and with
water, but hired Balaam against them, to curse them:
3 howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. And it
came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they
4 separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

[N] Now before this, Eliashib the priest, who was

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the assembly (of God): see on Ezra ii. 64, where the same word is translated 'congregation.'

2. because they met not, &c.: Ammonites and Moabites are excluded here on the ground of an historical episode, but according to Deut. xxiii. 2 (cf. with Gen. xix. 30 ff. (J)) as the children of incest, the latter ground being the more ancient.

3. the mixed multitude: the Hebrew word here (*'ereb*) occurs nowhere else in Ezra-Nehemiah, a reason for regarding this as a section apart from what has preceded. In Jer. xxv. 20 the word is used of the foreign population settled in Egypt for trade and other purposes. In Jer. l. 37 and in Ezek. xxx. 5 (though Cornill reads 'Arabs' in the latter passage) it denotes foreigners residing in Babylon. Apart from the immediate connexion one might conclude from general usage that the word means here non-Jews in and around Jerusalem who had some kind of status in the community (or assembly) of Yahweh. But in the light of the context we must interpret the word to mean all whose pure Jewish blood had been in any way compromised by mixed marriages, though the latter might have belonged to a former and even a remote generation. Meyer[1], altering the vowels of the word, reads 'Arabs,' i. e. Bedouin Arabs. But to speak of the separation of Israel from the Arabs, especially after the allusion to Ammonites and Moabites, would seem passing strange! The word in the sense here implied occurs only in the passages mentioned above. In Lev. xiii. 52, &c. (P) it denotes the woof of a garment.

4–9. *Tobiah's possessions cast out of the Temple chamber* (*cell*).

About 433 B.C. Nehemiah had for some unknown reason returned to the court at Susa. During his absence many irregularities had arisen, and in the remainder of this chapter we have an account of measures adopted after his return for removing some of them. Since the sacred dues had ceased to be paid (see verses 10–13) the chambers were no longer required for their usual purposes, so that Tobiah had been allowed to occupy two

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[1] p. 130.

appointed over the [a] chambers of the house of our God,
being allied unto Tobiah, had prepared for him a great 5
chamber, where aforetime they laid the meal offerings,
the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the

[a] Heb. *chamber.*

or more, making them one large one: see ver. 5. Tobiah was doubly disqualified for using the chambers in the Temple enclosure, for he was neither a priest nor Levite, nor was he even a Jew (see on ii. 10).

4. Eliashib the priest: it is agreed among scholars that the well-known high-priest of that name is meant (see on Ezra x. 6), though Herzfeld[1] denies this. It is possible that the word 'high' has fallen out before **priest.** As regards his having charge of the Temple chambers (cells), we know too little of the duties of the priesthood and high-priesthood of the time to conclude that the office here ascribed to Eliashib shows he was but an ordinary priest taking his turn with other priests.

chambers: see on Ezra viii. 29.

being allied, &c.: no one knows how, though many conjectures have been hazarded: see Ber.-Rys., Winckler[2], and Ryle.

5. a great chamber: probably two or more smaller ones had been thrown into one by the removal of the separating walls. In these chambers, before they had been made one, sacred gifts of various kinds had been stored, but now these had been put away to make room for Tobiah's 'household stuff' (ver. 8).

meal offerings: render, 'offerings.' The word has here, as in Malachi, the general sense which it bears in the older codes. In P it denotes cereal as opposed to flesh offerings. We are here, therefore, in this verse at an earlier stage of custom and law than that which meets us in P and related writings (Chron. &c.): see p. 18 f.

frankincense: lit. 'what is white,' so called from its colour. Our 'Albion' has the same consonants and perhaps (?) the same etymology as the Hebrew word here used (*lebonah*). The word stands strictly for a sweet-smelling gum or resin, obtained by exudation from various species of the Boswellia, a tree closely allied to the terebinth. It formed one ingredient of incense (see Exod. xxx. 34), but was offered also alone as a separate species of sacrifice (see Isa. xliii. 23, lxvi. 3; Jer. vi. 20). These references show that the present passage is not necessarily later than Nehemiah's time and hardly as late as the Priestly Code. The word translated 'incense' (*qeṭoret*) is used in pre-exilic writings for sacrificial smoke and nothing else. In P it means certain spices burnt to afford Yahweh a sweet odour. Such sacrifices as these—frankin-

[1] *Geschichte*(2), ii. 146. [2] *Alt. Orient. Forsch.* i. 233.

corn, the wine, and the oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters;
6 and the heave offerings for the priests. But in all this *time* I was not at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I went unto the king, and after certain days asked I leave of the king:
7 and I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing him a
8 chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff
9 of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meal offerings
10 and the frankincense. And I perceived that the portions

cense, &c.—originated among the Hebrews and Arabs at a comparatively late period, as they imply an advanced stage of civilization and consequent luxury[1].

tithes: see on x. 32 f.

6. Artaxerxes: see Ezra vii. 1.

Babylon: to the Hebrews this city would continue to appear as the capital of the Eastern world.

after certain days: lit. 'at the end of days,' the words being used vaguely for an indefinite period, as in 1 Kings xvii. 7; cf. Gen. iv. 3. Marquart reads 'at the end of his days,' i. e. when the time of his furlough had expired.

7. chamber: see on iii. 30.

courts: read (with LXX, Guthe, &c.), 'court.' The Temple court is meant.

8. household stuff: probably what is chiefly, if not exclusively, meant is the vessels, &c., used in sacrifice.

10–14. *Nehemiah re-establishes the payment to the Temple officials of their dues.*

This section explains how Tobiah was able to appropriate for his own use the large chamber (see on ver. 5) which was allotted him by Eliashib. The firstfruits, tithes, &c., had ceased to be paid (verses 10–13), so that the Temple storehouses (see on ver. 12) were no longer required for their ordinary purposes.

The fact that Nehemiah reproaches the people (ver. 11) for

[1] According to Sayce they existed among the Babylonians and Egyptians as far back as B.C. 3000.

of the Levites had not been given them; so that the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the 11
[a] rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and 12

[a] Or, *deputies*

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neglecting to pay their contributions shows that laws regulating such contributions had been made and proclaimed, i. e. verses 10–14 in the present chapter presuppose x. 37–39 (see p. 277).

10. portions: see on xii. 44.

the Levites: since the priests were to receive a tithe of the Levites' tithe (see x. 37–39) it is surprising that we do not read of their losses as well as those of the Levites: see at p. 243.

But it is exceedingly likely that the word **Levites** has here its wider sense and includes both priests and Levites. The addition of **singers** (probably 'and porters' must be added), as distinct from porters, lends support to this view.

were fled every one to his field: this is a confirmation of what is said in xi. 1 f. Up to the time when the walls were completed Jerusalem was very thinly populated, the great mass of the Jewish community, official and lay, residing in the country and supporting themselves on their several plots of land or otherwise. Priests and others had transferred themselves to the capital, and arrangements for their maintenance had been made, which in Nehemiah's absence had not been observed, so that they were obliged to return to the land.

According to the Deuteronomic code, priests (including Levites who are in that code synonymous with them) were to have no inheritance, but to depend for their support on altar dues, &c. (see Deut. xviii. 1 ff.). But after the destruction of the Temple religious as well as political organizations fell to pieces, so that for a long period after the exile the priests and Levites had to earn their own living. In Ezek. and in the P code (see Num. xxxv) certain cities were set apart for the Levites.

11. contended I, &c.: see verses 17, 21, 25.

rulers: Heb. *seganim*: see on ii. 16 and on Ezra ix. 1, where another word (rendered 'princes') with the same meaning occurs.

Why is the house of God forsaken? See on x. 39.

(I gathered) **them:** i. e. the Levites: see on ver. 10.

and set them in their place: i. e. restored them to their Temple posts.

12. Judah: i. e. the lay part of the community of the return, the *gola*, though it included some who were never out of the land: see on i. 2 and on vi. 21; cf. xii. 31, 44.

13 the wine and the oil unto the treasuries. And I made
treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and
Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next
to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattan-
iah: for they were counted faithful, and their business
14 was to distribute unto their brethren. Remember me,
O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my [a] good
deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and
for the observances thereof.

15 In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses

[a] Heb. *kindnesses.*

treasuries: the same Hebrew word is rightly rendered 'treasures' in xii. 44. Here it means rooms (chambers) where the treasures (firstfruits, tithes, &c.) were stored: see ver. 5, xii. 44; 2 Chron. xxxii. 27.

13. I made treasurers: the one Hebrew word (a verb explained as a denominative of the noun = 'treasure') occurs nowhere else, and it is better (with LXX Cod. ℵ, *Luc.*, Syr., Ryssel, Klostermann, Guthe-Batten) to read, 'I appointed over the treasuries Shelemiah,' &c.

Shelemiah, Zadok, and **Hanan** are mentioned in the same connexion among those that repaired the wall: see iii. 29 f.

Zadok was, like Ezra, a priest (see iii. 29; cf. vii. 40) and a scribe (see on Ezra vii. 6).

Pedaiah: see viii. 4.

next to them: lit. 'at their hand, ready to help': see on iii. 2, where the words seem to have a different sense; cf. xi. 24, 'at the king's hand.'

Zaccur: see xii. 35.

Mattaniah: see xi. 17. xii. 8, 25, 38.

Ryle thinks that Shelemiah represented the Temple priests, Zadok the 'judicial' section of the priests, Pedaiah the Levites proper, and Hanan the singers and porters.

14. See on v. 19. We have such a prayer at the close of each description of a reform due to Nehemiah: see verses 14, 22, 31.

15–22. *Provisions made for the strict observance of the Sabbath among the Hebrews.* See on x. 31, and for a history of the Hebrew Sabbath on ix. 14.

15. in Judah: the provisions were prepared in the country parts and then brought on the Sabbath day into Jerusalem.

treading winepresses: see Lam. i. 15; Isa. lxiii. 2. In the

on the sabbath, and bringing in [a] sheaves, and lading asses *therewith*; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre 16
also therein, which brought in fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the 17
nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is

[a] Or, *heaps of corn*

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process of making wine the grapes were placed in a stone receptacle called *gai* (Eng. 'wine-press') and afterwards trodden with bare feet. The juice thus obtained passed into a lower receptacle called *yegeb* (Eng. 'wine-vat'). Often wine-press and wine-vat were hewn out of the solid rock *in situ*. The E.VV. do not consistently observe the distinction between these words, for *yegeb* ('wine-vat') is called 'wine-press' in some nine or ten cases, e.g. Num. xviii. 27, 30; Deut. xv. 14; Judges vii. 21; Job v. 2; Jer. xlviii. 31, &c.

bringing in: i.e. harvesting.

sheaves: the margin is better.

The order in which the treading of wine-presses and the in-gathering of corn is mentioned here is not that of nature, as the vintage is later than the corn harvest by many weeks.

I testified, &c.: Hebrew idiom requires that the verb should be followed by the preposition translated 'in' (the day). It would make the construction simpler and the sense clearer if we read with Bertholet (making a few changes): 'And I testified against them when they sold victuals.' The M.T. is understood to say that the goods brought into Jerusalem were not sold until some day in the following week; but the construction is singular and vague, as the English will show. Bertheau, Schultz, Ryssel, and Ryle thought that no actual selling took place on the Sabbath, but ver. 16 proves the contrary.

16. men of Tyre: perhaps descendants of those who helped in the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra iii. 7); or they may have settled in the city to receive and sell (dried) fish sent them by kinsmen. 'Sidon' (near Tyre) means probably 'Fishing town.'

the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem: omit **and** with Arab., Syr., Vulg., and some MSS., rendering 'the Judahites in Jerusalem.'

17. nobles: see on ii. 16. Nehemiah concentrates his censure

18 this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not
your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil
upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath
19 upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to
pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark
before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should
be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened
till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I
over the gates, that there should no burden be brought
20 in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of
all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.
21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why
lodge ye [a] about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay
hands on you. From that time forth came they no more
22 on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that

[a] Heb. *before.*

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on them because they were responsible for the existing state of things.

profane: secularize, i. e. treat the Sabbath as an ordinary day.

18. See Jer. xvii. 21 ff. and cf. Ezra's prayer (Ezra ix. 6–15) and Nehemiah's (ix).

your fathers . . . our God: note the striking contrast of pronouns.

upon us: i. e. upon our nation. LXX^{B}, *Luc.*, Guthe read 'upon them and upon us.'

19-22. *The regulations made by Nehemiah.*

19. when the gates . . . began to be dark: more literally, 'as soon as the gates . . . began to have shadows on them,' or 'to have darkness on them.'

The gates were large stone structures with doors on either side, and usually a large one in the centre. It was through the side doors that passengers entered, the ordinary traffic (horses, &c.) passing through the central door, or rather gate: see on vi. i.

20. Though goods could not be brought into the city on the Sabbath, the people went out to buy, so that the Sabbath was broken all the same.

22. What were the Levites commanded to do?

1. To cleanse themselves ceremonially: see Ezra vi. 20; Neh. xii. 30.

2. Having temporarily appointed some of his own servants

they should purify themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember unto me, O my God, this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

In those days also saw I the Jews that [a] had married 23
women of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab: and their 24
children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and 25
[b] cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked

[a] Heb. *had made to dwell* with them. [b] Or, *reviled*

(see on iv. 16) to guard the gates during the Sabbath, Nehemiah made permanent appointment of some Levites to undertake the task. Reuss thinks that it is the Temple gates alone that the Levites are here commanded to watch, but through these gates goods for sale could hardly be brought. It must be admitted, however, that the Hebrew is strange.

23–29. *Nehemiah's strenuous protest against mixed marriages*: see ix. 2, x. 28, 30; Ezra ix. 1 ff., x. 1 ff.

23. saw I: perhaps during a tour of inspection (see ver. 15).

had married: see R.Vm. and on Ezra x. 2.

24. their children: the marriages were of some standing, as the children were old enough to be able to speak.

speech of Ashdod: perhaps a dialectical variety of Hebrew, but as we have no specimen of it its real character must always remain a problem [1].

the Jews' language: such Heb. as Nehemiah spoke and wrote. It is a great mistake to think that the Jews spoke Aramaic and not Hebrew after the return, though that was once the common view. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Nehemiah are written in excellent Hebrew, and so is most of Ezra.

according to the language: an awkward sentence, and probably (with the LXX) to be rejected as a gloss. The words can mean only that the other half spoke in the languages or dialects of the Ammonites and Moabites.

25. I contended: see verses 11, 17.

cursed them: i. e. the men. The same verb occurs in ver. 2, Mal. iii. 9, iv. 6. The curse would be conditional (see on x. 29),

[1] An Egyptian inscription of the 26th Dynasty (cir. B.C. 660) mentions the language of the Philistines as a distinct form of speech —so says Professor Sayce.

off their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves.
26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did strange
27 women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to trespass against our God in
28 marrying strange women? And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from

'May ye suffer . . . if ye put not away your strange wives.' The same verb in another species (*Hiph.*) means to treat with contempt, lit., 'to make little of' (a Welsh idiom), and Gesenius, Dathe, Lee, and others so explain here (see R.Vm). But without altering the vowels it can hardly have this sense here.

smote: in Egypt, Palestine, &c., persons are whipped with the koorbash and struck with the hand in a way that would be firmly resented in the West by the most menial.

plucked off their hair: see on Ezra ix. 3.

26. Did not Solomon, &c.: see 1 Kings xi. 1–8, iii. 17; 2 Sam. xii. 25.

no king like him: see 1 Kings iii. 12 f.; 2 Chron. i. 12.

strange (='foreign') **women:** see on Ezra x. 2.

27. Shall we then hearken, &c.: the verb is in form either passive third per. sing. or active first per. plur. We should probably render, 'As regards you (first for emphasis) is it (=can it be) reported that ye do all this,' &c. (see Deut. iv. 32): so Bertheau, Ryssel, Bertholet, &c. But Siegfried and others prefer to follow the LXX, Vulg., and the E.VV., rendering 'Shall we then listen to you' (i.e. your pleadings, &c.), 'that you may do,' &c. 'If Solomon failed to avoid the connecting evils, is it likely that you will?'

28. Eliashib the high priest: the latter words can as well, according to the Heb., go with Joiada (xii. 10), so that it is not certain that Eliashib was at the time alive.

Sanballat: see on ii. 10.

I chased him, &c.: i. e. apparently, 'I expelled him from the community.'

It is with this incident that Josephus[1] connects the building of

[1] *Antiq.* xi. 7, 2; v. 8, 2 f.

me. Remember them, O my God, [a] because they have 29
defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. Thus cleansed I them from 30
[b] all strangers, and appointed wards for the priests and for the Levites, every one in his work; and for the wood 31
offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits.
Remember me, O my God, for good.

[a] Heb. *for the defilings of &c.* [b] Or, *every thing strange*

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the Temple on Mount Gerizim in the time of Alexander the Great. But it is probable that he confounds the present incident with the expulsion of Manasses in 330 B. C.

29. Remember, &c.: in a bad sense, as in vi. 14. Contrast the force of the same verb in ver. 31, &c.

defiled the priesthood: see Lev. xx. 13–15. Joiada, if not now high-priest, was to hold that position after his father's death.

the covenant of, &c.: render, 'the covenant of the priests so *Luc.*, Guthe) and of the Levites' (see Mal. ii. 4-9, and Deut. xxxiii. 9).

30 f. *Nehemiah's own résumé of the work he did.*

30. (cleansed I) **them:** i. e. the priests and Levites.

from all strangers: Heb. 'from everything foreign,' i. e. foreign wives, religious rites, &c.

wards: successive watches or courses of priests and Levites (see on xii. 44 f.).

in his work: i. e. Temple service. Better with LXX^{B}, *Luc.*, Guthe), 'according to **his work.**' The change is of one consonant for another almost exactly like it.

31. the wood offering: see on x. 34.

firstfruits: see on x. 35–37.

Remember me, &c.: see verses 14, 22, v. 19.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

ESTHER

INTRODUCTION

I. Name of the Book.

This book is called in the Talm. B[1] *Megillat Ester*, or 'The Roll of Esther' (see under next section). It is also called by way of pre-eminence 'The Roll,' on account of the peculiar respect in which it was held.

In editions of the Hebrew Bible it is called simply 'Esther,' as it is also in the Greek versions. In the Syriac (Pesh.) and Vulg. the title is 'Book of Esther.'

In the enlarged version of the book current among the Alexandrians the name 'The Epistle of Purim' seems to have been given it, from a misunderstanding of Esther ix. 20, 29 (see on). But this title never came into general use, even at Alexandria.

II. Place in the Canon.

In our Hebrew Bible this book appears last of the five 'rolls' (*Megillot*), all of which are in the third 'Canon' of the O. T., that called the *Ketubim* ('writings') or *Hagiographa* ('Holy Things,' so called on account of the presence of the Psalms in it). The first of the five rolls to be so called was Esther, which received the name 'The Roll' at this time when, through its connexion with Purim, it came to be written on a separate parchment roll. On account of its being read during Purim[2] the term 'roll' came to be applied to four other books read on other festivals as follows:—(1) Canticles, read on Passover;

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[1] *Baba Bathra*, xiv b.

[2] The rules for the reading are given in full in the Talmudic Tract *Megillah*.

(2) Ruth, read on Pentecost; (3) Lamentations, read on the ninth of Ab, the day set apart for the commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586; (4) Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes), read during the Feast of Tabernacles. For other positions of this book in the MSS. and other editions of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles see Ryle, on *The Canon of the O.T.*(2), p. 292 ff., &c.

In the Talm. B. Berak. 57 B, we have a twofold arrangement of the *Ketubim* (*Hagiographa*).

1. The large 'K.' (Psalms, Proverbs, Job).

2. The small 'K.' (Canticles, Qoheleth, and Lamentations).

In his valuable work on the Canon (2) [1] Professor (now Bishop) Ryle makes a mistake in substituting Esther for Lamentations in (2) above.

The Talmudic passage is translated and commented on by the present writer in *The Interpreter*, July, 1909.

Esther is among the *Antilegomena*, or disputed books of the Hebrew Canon, the others being Ezekiel, Jonah, Proverbs, Canticles, and Qoheleth. The right of Esther to a place in the Canon was contested by many leading Jews and Christians down to the fourth century of our era. Paton (p. 97) affirms, what neither he nor any one else has proved, that the Jewish Synod held at Jamnia in A. D. 90 decreed this book to be canonical. It is absent from the list of O.T. books given by representative Jews to Melito, Bishop of Sardis (d. A. D. 175), and in the fourth century both Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen [2] (d. 389) denied it to be canonical. In the Eastern Church its canonicity was a matter of dispute even in the Middle Ages, for it was stoutly denied by Nicephorus Callistus [3] (d. *circa* 1330), though its recognition in the West was finally secured through its acceptance by the Council of Carthage (A. D. 397).

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[1] p. 293.
[2] Wildeboer, *Canon*, &c., 77.
[3] Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, p. 227.

One has to bear in mind the following features of the book to understand the suspicion with which it was regarded alike by Jews and Christians.

1. The Divine Being is not once mentioned or referred to from end to end of the book (this applies, however, to 1 Macc. also in critical texts) : see on v. 4.

2. No other part of the O.T. is referred to in this book, not even the *Torah*, nor is anything said about Jerusalem, the Temple, sacrifice, or about any festival except Purim, which has a secular origin and has no sanction in the Torah, &c.

3. The book is not once quoted in the N.T., a statement which, however, is equally true of Canticles, Qoheleth, Ezra, Nehemiah, and even the prophetical books Obadiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah.

4. More important than the absence of religious phraseology and of the religious spirit is the presence throughout the book of a low ethical standard. It is true that the treachery and cruelty of Haman are by implication condemned, but the writer gloats over the equal cruelty of Mordecai and Esther. Nothing seems wrong if only it furthers the advancement of the Jews—not of Judaism—for this last there is no concern whatever.

It is not, therefore, surprising that Luther wished the book did not exist, and that Ewald[1] said of it : 'Its story knows nothing of high and pure truths. In it we fall as if from heaven to earth.'

The book would never have been admitted into the Canon at all but that it gives an ostensible account of the origin of the Purim Feast, which the Jews had made religious, and supplies reasons for its observance.

Nevertheless in quite early times Esther came to occupy a position in the esteem and veneration of Jews second to the *Torah* (Pentateuch) alone, a position which it continues to hold. Rabbi b. Lakish (*circa* A.D. 300) says that Esther stands next to the *Torah*, while Maimonides

[1] *History* (Eng. Trans.), i. 197.

(d. A.D. 1204) says that when the Messiah comes the other books of the O.T. may pass away, but the *Torah* and Esther will abide for ever.

Apocryphal Additions to Esther.

In the oldest and best MSS. of the LXX (B. A., the Sinaitic, &c.) the book of Esther is much larger than in the M.T., for it contains 270 verses as compared with 163 in the Hebrew text. These additions are scattered throughout the book, and have for aim the supplying of the religious element which in the book is quite lacking. In Jerome's version and in the Vulg., which is based on it, the longest and most important of these additions are taken out of their context and put together at the end of the Canonical book, thus making them in a large measure unintelligible. In English, Welsh, and other modern versions not dependent on the Vulg., the above additions appear in the Apocrypha ('The Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther'). The editions of the LXX by Tischendorf-Nestle, Swete, &c., include these parts, and place them in their original connexion, which is the arrangement followed in the English translation of the LXX by Brereton. Thompson's English LXX leaves out the Apocrypha altogether, rendering the canonical parts only of the Greek Bible. 'The Rest of... Esther' is so obviously a later attempt to correct the non-religious character of the original Esther that no modern scholar defends their genuineness or could do so with any show of reason.

In the notes on Esther in the present volume the Apocryphal parts of the book are indicated by square brackets in the context in which they occur in the LXX, thus [Apoc. Esther xi. 2–xii. 6]. In Swete's edition they are designated by the letters **A, B,** &c., as follows :—

A (Lat. Eng. xi. 2–xii. 6) : Mordecai's dream ; how he came to honour ; precedes Esther i. 1.

B (Lat. Eng. xiii. 1–7) : Letter of Artaxerxes ; follows Esther iii. 13.

C (Lat. Eng. xiii. 8–xiv. 19): The prayers of Mordecai and Esther; follows Esther iv. 17.

D (Lat. xv. 4–19, Eng. xvi. 1–16): Esther visits the king and wins his favour; follows C, preceding immediately Esther v.

E (Lat. Eng. xvi. 1–24): Letter of Artaxerxes; follows Esther viii. 12.

F (Lat. Eng. x. 4–xi): Epilogue describing the establishment of Purim; follows Esther x. 3.

Besides the lengthy interpolations noticed above there are also in the LXX small additions which are omitted from the Latin version and therefore from the English and Welsh Apocrypha, these additions being for the most part explanatory glosses. There are also in the LXX numerous omissions of words and sentences found in the M.T. A careful study of the additions and of the omissions makes it evident that the M.T. represents the original text of the book.

Modern scholars almost to a man agree that the 'Additions' are some decades later in date (say 100 B. C.) than the Canonical Esther, though they owe their existence to the same movement of thought and feeling as those which prompted our Esther and the many Targums and Midrashes on the book. Some writers (chiefly Roman Catholic divines like Langen, Kaulen, and Scholtz) maintain that the original language of the 'Additions' was Hebrew or Aramaic. But a careful study of the text makes it plain that its language is that of one writing originally in Greek and not translating. And many other considerations confirm the conclusion thus reached. See Ryssel, *Kautzsch. Apoc.* i. 193 ff., and Fuller, *Speaker's Bible, Apoc.* i. 36^2 ff.

III. Abstract of Contents.

The book gives the history of Esther and her cousin Mordecai, and tells how the former became Xerxes' queen and Mordecai that king's grand vizier, and how both

secured the deliverance of their people the Jews from the massacre planned by Haman, in commemoration of which deliverance the Feast of Purim was established.

For more detailed analysis see the annotations on the text in which the various sections and subsections of Esther and the 'Rest of Esther' are laid out and summarized.

IV. Aim and Character of the Book.

The Commentaries and Introductions say with practically one voice that the purpose contemplated in writing this book was to supply motives for the keeping of the Feast Purim. But this is a superficial view to take. Why should the Jews of the circle to which the writer belonged be obsessed by a desire to make *this particular festival*, about which their law says nothing, permanent? And why with such a desire was such a book as Esther written? To the first question the present writer's answer is that this institution had become a part of the nation's life and could not be suppressed. The question would naturally arise, If this feast of heathen origin and with heathen suggestions *must be* tolerated, how can it be emptied of its heathen contents and be made the channel through which Jewish patriotism, such as had been recently displayed in the Maccabean wars, should be expressed and reinforced? That was the task the writer seems to have set before him, and in the Hebrew Esther we have his attempt to perform it—an admirable attempt too, judged from the literary and every other point of view, though at times the author is guilty of inconsistencies and anachronisms which will be pointed out and commented on in the notes.

Esther is therefore a didactic romance, a novel with a purpose, like many of the novels of Charles Kingsley, Dickens, and George Eliot.

Is the book historical in the literal sense? To this question the answer of the older commentators and of many moderns has been 'Yes' (Hävernick, Keil, &c.).

Since the time of Semler (Professor at Halle, d. 1791), who made a vigorous onslaught upon the historicity of the book, scholars have come more and more to regard Esther as a romance, composed to set forth and illustrate the ideas the author wished to have connected with Purim. An intermediate position is taken up by many scholars (Schultz, &c.), viz. that there is a basis of fact in the book, though the latter is to a large extent the work of the writer's imagination, controlled, of course, by his purpose. No one has up to the present been able to find out this nucleus of fact and to support it from external sources. The historical background of the book is almost certainly the patriotism evoked by the Maccabean wars, as Spinoza[1], that marvellous forerunner in philosophy, science, and biblical criticism, surmised, though he assigned a similar date for Ezra-Nehemiah, which is absurd, as well as for Daniel, which is reasonable.

The following considerations make it impossible to regard Esther as a record of actual occurrences.

1. The period implied is that of Xerxes I (see on i. 1), who reigned from 485 to 465. But its second hero, Mordecai, is said to have been one of the exiles taken with Jehoiachin in 597 (ii. 6). This would make Mordecai when he first comes before us in this book some 130 years old and Esther, who won the king's heart by her virgin charms, 70 at least! Rawlinson's way out of this difficulty is not a happy one (see *Speaker's Comm.* on ii. 6).

2. According to this book (i. 12) women and men could not eat together, even in Persia; but we know from ancient historians[2] that this is contrary to fact. The writer transfers the habits of his own time and country to a time and country which do not suit, though for his own immediate purpose it matters little, if anything.

3. Persian history knows nothing of any queen of Xerxes

[1] See *Tractatus Theol.-Pol.* cap. x. [2] Her. ix. 110 f., &c.

except one called Amestris, who, though at one time divorced, was afterwards restored.[1]

4. Persian law required that the king should take his wife or wives from one of seven Persian noble families, so that it would have been impossible for Esther, a Jewess, to become a Persian queen.[2]

5. It is very improbable that Esther could for so long a time have concealed her relationship with Mordecai and her Jewish descent from court, king, and people (see on ii. 10).

6. What purpose could be served by keeping the virgin candidates in a kind of quarantine for a whole year? See on ii. 12.

7. It is unlikely, to say the least, that either Haman the Amalekite (see on iii. 1) or Mordecai the Jew should have risen to be the chief ruler in Persia next to Xerxes, and in non-biblical history there is no intimation that anything of the kind took place or could take place.

8. It is improbable that the whole of Susa should have been so deeply stirred by episodes in the history of the Jewish population, and only a Jew could have written iii. 15 and viii. 15, and that with a view to national glorification.

9. In the hundred and twenty provinces of Persia (see on i. 1) and the eighty days' banquet (see on i. 14) we have other examples of the writer's tendency towards exaggerated statements, so as to give piquancy to his tale.

10. That the king should have quite forgotten the benefactor who had saved his life (ii. 21 ff. and vi. 1 ff.) is another of the improbabilities of the book.

V. Unity and Integrity.

With the exception of small parts (words, phrases, and some verses) the whole of the book as it appears in the

[1] Her. vii. 14; ix. 112. [2] Ib. iii. 84.

Hebrew is acknowledged to be by one writer as far as ix. 19. Most modern critics regard ix. 20–32 as belonging to a different source: so J. D. Michaelis, Kamphausen, Ryssel, Oettli, König, Wildeboer, Baudissin, and Paton, the latter including, as must be done, x. 1–3. The grounds on which these writers go refer to language and subject-matter.

1. There are in ix. 20 ff. words and expressions not found in the earlier part of the book, and, on the contrary, many words and expressions common in the earlier part are here absent. See an excellent list in Paton, 59 f.

2. As regards the contents, there are items in ix. 20 ff. inconsistent with what has gone before. According to vii. 15 and ix. 14, Haman and his sons were impaled at different times, but ix. 25 seems to mean that they were impaled all at one time. In vi. 12–viii. 2 Esther comes before us as the deliverer of the Jews, but in ix. 25 she is not even mentioned in connexion with the affair. The king's sentence upon Haman in vii. 8 f. and ix. 25 appears to be different and to imply a different source: see further Paton, 57 ff. It must be owned, however, that the contradictions pointed out by recent writers are not very manifest in many cases, and it has to be borne in mind that there are inconsistencies in i–ix. 19, as Paton himself admits[1]. Thus, in ii. 5 Mordecai is one of the captives of 597; in viii. 2, 123 years later, he becomes chief minister of Persia and displays in his policy all the vigour of a young man.

It should be added that ix. 20–x. 3 does not seem very essential to the completeness of the book, and it looks much like an addition made at a later time when Purim was kept by Jews generally during two days.

VI. Date and Authorship.

The book was written about 130 B. C. The evidence for this is of two kinds, external and internal.

[1] *Com.* 72.

1. EXTERNAL. Apart from Esther itself we find no earlier reference to Purim than that which occurs in 2 Macc. xv. 36, where we read that Nicanor's day (13th Adar) was followed by Mordecai's day, i.e. Purim. Now this Apocryphal book is not much older than the commencement of the Christian era. In Sir. xliv–xli (date *circa* 180 B. C.) there is a long list of Israel's worthies, but the names of Esther and Mordecai are lacking, almost certainly because the Book of Esther had not been written. A footnote to the Greek Esther says that the book was brought to Egypt in the fourth year of Ptolemy and Cleopatra (i. e. probably Ptolemy Philometor, d. 146). This reference shows that Esther was in circulation by the end of the second century B.C., if not earlier.

Josephus (d. *circa* A. D. 95) was well acquainted with this book and looked upon it as ancient.[1]

2. INTERNAL EVIDENCE. (1) *The style.* Though the author makes a courageous attempt to write in the Hebrew of an earlier time—the time, in fact, of Xerxes I (d. 495)—and avoids some words characteristic of his own day (e.g. the short relative *sh*, &c.), yet the book abounds in late words (Aramaisms, &c.). See the Introductions of Kuenen (Dutch and German) and Driver, and the commentaries of Ber.-Rys., and Paton.

The Hebrew of Esther resembles closely that of Chronicles, Daniel, and especially that of Ecclesiastes, only that as this book is the latest in the O. T. it has some fresh marks of a later date.

(2) *Matter.* The book reflects a period of strong national spirit and pride, a rebound from a feeling of depression and shame which seems to have but recently passed away. Some great victory on the part of the Jews over their foes appears to be at the back of the book and to form a large part of the inspiration of the writer. Such a state of things existed about 130 B. C., at the close of

[1] *Antiq.* xi. 6.

the Maccabean wars, and this date or one near it has been generally fixed upon by recent scholars. The embittered narrow national sentiment of the book suits no period so well as this one.

The references to Jewish proselytes in viii. 17 and ix. 27 prove that the book could not have been written earlier than the third century B. C.

That the author was a Jew is made evident by the intense nationalism which he displays and also by the excellent Hebrew in which he writes. ii. 5 gives some support to the view that he was a Benjamite. The fact that he makes no reference to Jerusalem, the Temple, sacrifice, or the feasts, goes far to prove that he was not a resident at Jerusalem, or even in Palestine. The Persian words he uses and the Persian complexion which the book bears makes it likely that he had lived long in Persia, though more than that one may not say with any confidence.

VII. The Feast Purim and the Word 'Pur.'

The present writer has of set purpose held back his necessarily brief discussion of the above points to the close of this Introduction, as he is of opinion that a clear conception of the aim and drift of this book can be obtained without their consideration. Opinions on both these questions have been so numerous and conflicting that they are greatly in danger of hiding the main issue and of confusing the reader. In order to understand the plays of Shakespeare one is not bound to know all or much about the sources which he has used, though for a history of the plays, as for a history of the rise of Esther, a study of sources is unavoidable. For the view of the book which has been given[1] it is necessary to assum · that the Feast of Purim is of non-Jewish origin, but that it came to have such vogue among Jews that it could

[1] p. 296.

not be got rid of. It was therefore made into a Jewish feast and commended by a romance based on Babylonian (or Persian?) mythology, which served to express and foster the patriotism which recent events had called forth. Many scholars, however, hold that this feast arose for the first time on Jewish ground, most of these holding with J. D. Michaelis, Reuss, &c., that it was instituted to commemorate the victory of Judas Maccabaeus over Nicanor, general of the Syrian army, on the 13th Adar, 161 B. C.[1] Paul Haupt ably and interestingly defends this view in his *Purim*.[2] If, however, the festival had a Jewish origin it must have received a Jewish name. But *Pur* is admittedly not a Hebrew word, and Haupt himself derives it from 'an old Persian equivalent of the Vedic *pûrti* = portion': so *Purim* = portions, gifts (Esther ix. 19, 22). Moreover, no Jew at this period of national awakening and of narrow national zeal would have dreamt of calling in a tale based on heathen mythology to bolster up a native feast.

The view which commands the strongest support among modern scholars is that which regards Purim as the continuation of the Babylonian New Year's Feast Zagmuk held in the month Nisan (March–April : see on Ezra x. 9, 17). So Zimmern[3], Jensen, Nöldeke, Winckler, and Frazer[4]. Zimmern, following a hint of Lagarde, derived *pur* from the Babylonian *pukhru* ('an assembly'), another name of the above Babylonian feast, so called because on that day the gods, presided over by Marduk, met in assembly to decide by lot the events of the opening year. It is, however, hard to see how *pur* can come from *pukhru*, and Zimmern has now abandoned this etymology[5].

Zimmern further connects the names 'Mordecai' and 'Marduk[6],' and the names 'Esther' and 'Ishtar,' as is

[1] See 1 Mac. vii. 40-45; Jos *Antiq.* xii. 408.
[2] 8vo, pp. 53, Leipzig, 1906. [3] Stade's *ZATW.* 1891, 157 ff.
[4] *Golden Bough*[2], iii. p. 151 ff. [5] See *KAT.*[(3)] 518.
[6] Ib. 395; see on Esther ii. 5.

now generally done. Jensen has pointed out the interesting coincidence that Marduk and Ishtar are cousins. But it must be admitted that Marduk the god and Mordecai the Jew play very different parts, and it is to be noted that Zagmuk was held in the very beginning of Nisan, *Purim* in the middle of the preceding month.

Jensen has developed the theory of Zimmern still further, making, however, many modifications as well as additions. He holds that in Esther the principal source is Babylonian, but that Elamite mythology has been also drawn upon, and in particular the Gilgameš legend, which Jensen makes the source of most of the tales in the O. T., the *Iliad*, and of even the life of Christ. Hadassah, Esther's other name = the Babylonian *hadashatu*, bride, used as a title for goddesses.

Haman = Humban or Humman, the chief god of the Elamites, in whose chief city, Susa, the events of the book occur (yet Haman was no god!). Vashti is connected with the Mashti or Vashti of the Elamite inscriptions. Other names in the book are similarly explained. Jensen derives *Pur* from a hypothetical Babylonian *puru* or *buru* = 'a stone,' then (but what proof is there of this?) 'a lot'; but we now know that the word should be read *barti*.

Bruno Meissner[1], adopting most of what Zimmern says, holds that we have at the basis of Esther an Ishtar, not a Marduk legend.

Lagarde traces the Purim Feast to the Persian All-Saints Festival held in honour of the departed, and the word *pur* to the Persian name of that Feast of the Dead, *Farwardigân*. In this etymology he was, however, anticipated by von Hammer in 1872,[2] and even by that rare English theologian and Orientalist, Thomas Hyde (d. 1703), who assisted Walton in his Polyglot, and wrote a very learned work in Latin on the 'Religion of the Ancient Persians.' But this derivation has been proved

[1] *ZDMG.* 1896, p. 266, &c. [2] *Wien. Jahrb. für Lit.*

to be philologically impossible [1], and Lagarde himself gave it up in later years in favour of an etymology (the Mandaic *puhrâ*, meal) said to be akin to that afterwards adopted by Hommel and Zimmern [2] (*pukhru*, 'a festive assembly').

Schwally [3] accepts Zimmern's former etymology *pukhru*, but with it combines Lagarde's identification of the feasts Purim and the Persian Farwardigân. In both there is feasting, in the latter the dead being supposed to share (cf. Jer. xvi. 7); in both presents were exchanged. With Schwally, as later with Jensen, the descent of Gilgameš into the lower world suggested the doctrine of the resurrection [4]. The absence of Divine names from the book is to be attributed (Schwally thinks) to the unwillingness of Jewish scholars to admit the book into the Canon unless the name of God was left out of a composition admittedly based on the cult of ancestors.

Grätz's theory of a Greek origin for Purim (= Pithorgia) and his Hebrew etymology of the word (*purah*, 'winepress,' so previously J. D. Michaelis) have found no followers.

For full and excellent discussions of the whole question see Introductions to the commentaries of Wildeboer and Paton, and the monographs by Paul Haupt (already mentioned), Wilhelm Erbt, *Die Purimsage in der Bibel* (Berlin, 1900), and (from the Jewish conservative point of view) Sigmund Jampel, *Die Beurteilung des Estherbuches und des Purimfestes* (Pressburg, 1905).

For interesting accounts of the mediaeval and modern observance of Purim see I. Abraham's *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 260 ff. (he calls it the Jewish Carnival), *Jewish Encyc.* 'Purim,' and *The Home and Synagogue of the Modern Jew*, p. 139 ff. The thirteenth day is observed as a fast. On the fourteenth the Roll of Esther is read. The fifteenth is kept as a very merry day, many excesses (drinking, &c.) being often indulged in.

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[1] See Haupt, *op. cit.* p. 21. [2] *ZATW.* 1891, 157 ff.

[3] *Das Leben nach dem Tode* (1892), p. 42–5.

[4] See this matter ably discussed by Orr, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 242 ff.

For list of abbreviations see pp. 35 ff.

LITERATURE.

The following is a list of the important exegetical works on Esther used by the author, most of them referred to in the notes. The present writer has consulted many other works, ancient and modern, though in every case he has tried to give his own judgement after consulting the text, versions, Targums, &c.

The commentaries by the following include Esther as well as Ezra-Nehemiah (see p. 36):—

Adeney, W. F., Bertheau and Ber.-Rys., Kamphausen, Keil, Oettli, Rawlinson, F. W. Schultz, Siegfried.

Note besides commentaries on Esther by the following:—

Cassel, D.: Trans. by A. Bernstein.

Haley, J. W. (and others): Many useful hints and references.

Paton, L. B. (T. & T. Clark): The most up-to-date commentary existing and the fullest in English, though the writer withholds his own opinion too much or it is lost in the details of other opinions.

Scholz, A. (German): Contains a great mass of materials, but very fanciful in its interpretations.

Streane, A. W.: *Camb. Bible*, short but good and reliable.

Wildeboer, D. G. (German): Brief but scholarly.

The following new and suggestive essay came into the author's hands as the proofs of the present work were being corrected:—*Le Prologue—Cadre des Mille et Une Nuits: Les Légendes perses et Le Livre d'Esther*, par J. Cosquin, Paris, 1909: see p. 363.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

1 Now it came to pass in the days of [a]Ahasuerus, (this is

[a] Or, *Xerxes* Heb. *Ahashverosh.*

[Apoc. Esther xi. 2–xii. 6. Mordecai's dream; the manner in which he secured the king's favour.][1]

CH. I. THE KING MAKES TWO BANQUETS (1–8) AND THE QUEEN ONE (9). THE QUEEN PUT AWAY FOR HER DISOBEDIENCE TO THE KING (10–22).

1–4. *The king's banquet for his officials.*

1. Now it came to pass: the Hebrew for this is that usually translated 'And it came to pass,' and it implies generally a connexion with something preceding. It suitably begins the historical books Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Nehemiah, since such a connexion exists, but this is not the case in the first verse of Ruth, Ezekiel, Jonah, or in the present verse. In fact 'waw consecutive' construction became in course of time a tense form pure and simple, and it should be here so regarded. Render therefore, 'It came to pass,' &c. In non-Semitic languages, including classical (not Hellenistic, but cf. the views of Deissmann, Thumb and Moulton) Greek, the main verb would not be thus introduced. Arab., Heb., &c., instead of saying 'And Jesus spake' would prefer, 'And it came to pass that Jesus spake.'

Ahasuerus: though the LXX, Jos., render Artaxerxes (see Ezra iv. 7) no other king than Xerxes (485–465 B. C.) can be meant. This has been generally admitted by scholars from a comparison of what is said in Herodotus, &c., and in this book. Of no other Persian king could the author of Esther write as he does of the king mentioned in this verse. The question has, however, been finally set at rest by the deciphering of the trilingual inscriptions of Behistun, in the Babylonian column of which the name of this king appears in a form differing very little from the Hebrew (*Akhashwerosh*), here transliterated Ahasuerus: see on Ezra iv. 6.

this is Ahasuerus, &c.: added to distinguish him from others with the same name.

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[1] The Apocryphal additions occur in the LXX where in this Commentary the passages are mentioned as above in square brackets.

Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia,
over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:) that 2
in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne
of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the [a]palace, in the 3
third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his
princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media,

[a] Or, *castle*

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from India . . . Ethiopia, an hundred and seven and twenty provinces: so viii. 9, Apoc. Esther xiii. 1, xvi. 1, and (of Darius Hystaspis) 1 Esd. iii. 2. **India** (Heb. *Hoddu*, from the Old Pers.) denotes here, as in classical geography, the territory watered by the seven streams of the Indus (whence it gets its name) and not the entire peninsula now so called. **Ethiopia** (Heb. *Kush*) stands for Nubia.

over: omit; it is not in the Heb. The following words are simply an explanation of **from India even unto Ethiopia.**

The phrase **an hundred and seven and twenty provinces** (see the other examples of its use) is a gross exaggeration, exceeded, however, by Josephus, who says[1] that Darius the Mede exercised rule over 360 provinces, though in the present passage he agrees with the M. T. According to Dan. vi. 2 the kingdom of Darius the Mede contained 120 provinces. Herodotus[2], on the other hand, says that Darius divided his kingdom into 20 satrapies, and contemporary Darius inscriptions confirm this. It is quite possible that we are here, as certainly in Ezra ii. 1, Neh. vii. 6, to understand sub-satrapies. But we have no non-biblical confirmation of such usage except in Josephus, who follows the O.T. almost exclusively.

2. Shushan the palace: better, 'Susa the fortress.' In ix the fortified part of Susa (ver. 7) is distinguished from the rest of Susa (ver. 15); see on ii. 5 and on Neh. i. 2.

3. in the third year: i. e. in 483.

feast: lit. 'a drinking meal,' 'a symposium,' because drinking wine, &c., formed the principal part. But (see on v. 4) what was the purpose of so representative a banquet? No one knows, though many guesses have been made.

princes: render, 'officials' (see on Ezra ix. 1). Government officials are meant.

servants: members of the royal court, stewards, and the

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[1] *Antiq.* x. 11. 5; lit., 'He (Daniel) was one of the three satraps whom he (Darius the Mede) appointed over the 360 satrapies.'

[2] iii. 89.

the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before
4 him: when he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom
and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even
5 an hundred and fourscore days. And when these days
were fulfilled, the king made a feast unto all the people
that were present in Shushan the palace, both great and
small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's

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like, courtiers (see iii. 21, iv. 11, v. 11; 1 Kings v. 15; Jer. xxxvi. 24, &c.).

the power of Persia, &c.: read (with Ryss., Buhl, &c.), '(servants) and the officers of the army of Persia,' &c. The words corresponding to 'and the officers of' have fallen out by haplography.

Persia and Media: a Medo-Persian kingdom was founded by Cyaxares the Mede (635–584). In 549 Cyrus the Persian became head of what came to be known as the equivalent of Perso-Media or Persia and Media.

nobles: the word in the M.T. is a Hebrew form of the Persian = 'first men.' The members of the aristocracy are meant.

4. Render, 'When he showed (them) his glorious royal wealth and the costliness (lit. 'preciousness') of his majesty's apparel.'

an hundred and fourscore days: not, of course, to be understood literally—it is part of the romance. No banquet could last so long which had in it so many government functionaries from all parts of the known world. Clericus tries to evade the difficulty by imagining that the guests partook of the banquet in successive batches, but there is no hint of that here.

5–8. *The king's banquet for non-official residents and visitors*—**the people**, &c. It is possible, and is usually taken for granted, that the participants in the first banquet shared also in this, but it seems to the present writer improbable.

5. that were present: the Heb. (='that could be found') includes visitors as well as residents (see on Ezra viii. 25).

in the court, &c.: in the enclosed court paved with mosaic which (court) formed part of the park or 'paradise' surrounding the royal palace (see Xen. *Cyro.* i. 3, 12, 14).

6. The text is evidently very corrupt, and every critical editor has his own way of restoring (?) it. The following rendering involves changes which are few and for the most part vouched for in the versions: 'The awnings were of blue cotton fastened' (the participle, though singular, may in good Hebrew qualify 'awn-

palace; *there were hangings of* [a]white *cloth*, *of* [b]green, and 6
of blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to
silver rings and pillars of marble: the couches were of
gold and silver, upon a pavement [c]of red, and white, and
yellow, and black marble. And they gave them drink in 7
vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from
another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the
[d]bounty of the king. And the drinking was according 8

[a] Or, *fine* cloth, *white and blue* [b] Or, *cotton*
[c] Or, *of porphyry, and white marble, and alabaster, and stone of blue colour* [d] Heb. *hand.*

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ings') 'by purple linen cords' (omit 'and' before 'purple') 'to silver rings (or rods?) and (to) white marble pillars.'

white *cloth*: Heb. (one word) 'whiteness.' Read, 'awnings,' the Heb. word for the latter (*y*^{e}*ri*$^{'}$*oth*) could be easily read for that in the M. T. in a blurred copy.

of **green**: the word in the M.T. is Persian and means 'cotton.'

and (*of* blue): omit and join 'cotton' to 'blue,' 'cotton of blue' = (in Heb. idiom) 'blue (or purple) cotton.'

rings: this rendering is supported by Cant. v. 14 (where alone the word occurs besides here), by the etymology and by the sense. There were rings attached to the marble pillars, and to these the linen cords were fastened. The awnings would serve to keep off the intense heat and blaze of the sun.

couches: i. e. divans on which the ancient Persians reclined during meals. The custom, though not originally a Hebrew one, existed among the Hebrews in the eighth century B.C. (see Amos vi. 4) and in later times was universal among the Jews. It is still usual in Palestine, &c. The couches were made of solid gold and silver, not merely covered with cloth of gold and silver. Herodotus speaks of gold and silver couches and tables among the Persians.

upon a pavement: render, 'upon a mosaic pavement of alabaster and white marble and mother-of-pearl and black marble.' The words characterizing the pavement are names of materials, not of colours, though there is uncertainty as to what exactly some of the terms denote as they occur nowhere else in the O. T.

7. the vessels being diverse: this was the case on very grand occasions. In banquets depicted on the monuments the vessels are uniform in size, shape, and material.

(according to the) **bounty**: lit. 'hand,' i. e. means of the king. So ii. 18; 1 Kings x. 13; cf. Neh. ii. 8.

to the law; none could compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should
9 do according to every man's pleasure. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house
10 which belonged to king Ahasuerus. On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven [a] chamberlains

[a] Or, *eunuchs* (and so in ver. 12, &c.)

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8. (according to) **the law**: i. e. that made for the present occasion. The ancient Persians are known from Herodotus and others to have been heavy drinkers, and at banquets each guest was expected to drink at least a certain minimum quantity. During this feast there was perfect freedom on the matter.

9. *Vashti's banquet for the women*: why this separate women's feast, for in Xerxes' time women in Persia could eat and drink with men? It was hardly, as some suppose, because there was no room: perhaps the writer unconsciously projects into the picture drawn the customs of his own country and time.

Vashti: Xerxes' wife according to Herodotus[1] was Amestris, which may be the same word varied by phonetic changes and in part by corruption. Jensen identifies the name with that of the Elamite Vashti (or Mashti): see p. 303.

royal house: lit., 'house of the kingdom.' The women's banquet was held in a part of the palace proper, as was perhaps that of the officials (ver. 3 ff.).

10–12. *Vashti refuses to appear before the guests as the king desires.*

10. seventh day: i.e. of the banquet, when the heart of the king was merry with wine. These words are intended to account for the foolish request of the king.

Mehuman, &c.: the spelling of these seven names varies much in the MSS. and versions, and their etymology is very uncertain, as perhaps they were borne by men of several nationalities.

the seven (chamberlains): on the sacred number 'seven' see on Ezra vii. 14, and cf. ver. 14.

chamberlains: render, 'eunuchs' here and in ver. 12, &c. In Persia, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Palestine, &c., men-servants who had to wait on women or to have access to them needed to be eunuchs, as is the case in the modern Orient.

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[1] vii. 61.

that ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,
to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown 11
royal, to shew the peoples and the princes her beauty:
for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti 12
refused to come at the king's commandment by the
chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and
his anger burned in him. Then the king said to the 13
wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's
manner toward all that knew law and judgement; and the 14
next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish,
Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of

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that ministered: LXX 'who were deacons,' i. e. servants.

11. the crown (royal): the word in the M.T. (*kether*) occurs here and in ii. 17 of what the queen wore and in vi. 8 of what was placed on the king's horse. It occurs nowhere else in the O.T. Probably it is the Heb. form of the Persian *kidaris*, a tall, stiff, bejewelled cap worn by Persian kings on the ancient monuments. The usual word for crown is found in viii. 15 for what Mordecai wore. See Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains* (5), p. 320, n. †.

13–22. *The wise men consulted by the king advise him to put Vashti away.*

13–15. *The king consults his wise men, showing that there was no law dealing with the conduct of the queen.*

13. wise men: usually explained as embracing (1) astrologers (see Dan. ii. 27, v. 15), men 'who knew the times,' and (2) those who understood the principles and practice of equity (who 'knew law and judgement'), i. e. those who sought guidance from the Supreme Mind as He revealed it in the heavenly bodies, and those who decided from their knowledge and experience of men's way. But one class only is suggested by the words and by the context, the alternate descriptions being due merely to parallelism. Those who took knowledge of the times understood the principles and customs of the law courts.

for so, &c.: render, 'for so was the king's business brought before all that knew,' &c.

14. Of the wise men mentioned in ver. 13, seven stood nearest the king, constituting, in fact, his privy council.

Carshena, &c.: the exact spelling of these seven names is uncertain, as the text is corrupt and MSS. and versions differ: see on ver. 10.

seven (princes): see on Ezra vii. 14. and cf. ver. 10.

Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and sat
15 first in the kingdom :) What shall we do unto the queen
Vashti according to law, because she hath not done the
bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?
16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes,
Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only,
but also to all the princes, and to all the peoples that are
17 in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this
deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, to
make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it
shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded
Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she
18 came not. And this day shall the princesses of Persia
and Media which have heard of the deed of the queen
[a] say *the like* unto all the king's princes. So *shall there*
19 *arise* [b] much contempt and wrath. If it please the king,

[a] Or, *tell* it [b] Or, *enough*

16-20. *What the wise men advised.* Memucan seems to be the spokesman for the whole body.

16. Vashti had wronged the king and set a dangerous example to his subjects.

17. to make, &c.: render (more literally), 'so that it will make them (the women) despise their husbands in their eyes, as they (the women) say, the king,' &c.

husbands: the word = 'owner,' 'master,' and well suits the connexion. It occurs also in Gen. xx. 3; Deut. xxiv. 4; Hos. ii. 15. The common Hebrew word for husband is *ish* = Latin *vir*, Greek *aner*.

when . . . reported: the Hebrew may as in the E.VV. be understood impersonally or as in above rendering personally. The irregularity of the suffix in the latter case will give no Hebraist the least trouble.

18. say: the verb has no expressed object, but the context makes it quite clear that the incident of Vashti's refusal is intended to be so understood: 'Shall . . . say (about this) to all,' &c.

princes: see on ver. 3.

So *shall,* &c.: read, making a slight change in the Heb., 'and whenever (on the part of the wife) there is contempt there is (on the part of the husband) wrath.'

19. If it please: see on Neh. ii. 5.

let there go forth a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, [a] that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate [b] unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make 20
shall be published throughout all his kingdom, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. And the saying pleased the 21
king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: for he sent letters into all the 22
king's provinces, into every province according to

[a] Heb. *that it pass not away.* [b] Heb. *unto her companion.*

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unto another: the translation is quite correct, the R.Vm. 'Heb. **unto her companion**' being inaccurate. The same noun in its masc. form occurs in the idiom '(we must love) each the other.'

20. great and small: i. e. men of all ranks of society.

21 f. *The king follows out the advice given him.*

22. letters: better 'dispatches,' as the former word suggests much that is not meant. The Heb. noun is generally translated 'book' (books), see ii. 23; Neh. viii. 1, &c.; 'books' and 'dispatches' (letters) differed then almost exclusively in size only.

Persia had in the time of Xerxes (who, according to Herodotus [1], founded it) an excellent postal service which made use of couriers (Heb. 'runners,' see iii. 13) and horses (viii. 10). In Palestine and other mountainous countries the couriers (fleet footmen) were principally used, but in level countries and especially for great distances these couriers rode on swift horses, making journeys off the main road on foot. In Jer. xii. 5 there is a reference to the quicker movement of the horses as compared with the footmen. Jer. li. 31 suggests that at the time implied a courier-post was all that existed in Babylon. It should be remembered, however, that the ancient Persian postal system, fully described by Herodotus [1] and Xenophon [2], was used exclusively by the king and the government. The poorer people had no official mode of communication.

province: see on ver. 7 and cf. p. 55.

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[1] viii. 98. [2] *Cyr.* viii. 6, § 17.

the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and should publish it according to the language of his people.

2 After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was pacified, he remembered Vashti, and what she had
2 done, and what was decreed against her. Then said the

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writing . . . language, &c: in the dispatches various scripts (Arabic, Aramaic, Assyrian, Hebrew, Greek—all different) as well as languages would have to be used. Had Xerxes in his court scribes capable of all this? Trilingual inscriptions have, however, been discovered in Persia. But there is reason for believing that Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of the western portions of the Persian dominions at that time: cf. the recently found Aramaic papyri. It should be added that in parts of modern Persia and Russia postal arrangements are much the same as is implied in this book, only not so 'up to date!'

every man should bear rule, &c.: woman has always held a low place in the East, though to a less degree among the ancient Persians.

and should publish: render, 'and should speak,' &c., the meaning of which appears to be that the language of the husband must be that of the home, so that his wife, if a foreigner, must learn and speak it. But it is better (with Hitzig and most moderns) to read 'and should speak (=order) what he pleases.' See on iii. 12.

ii. 1–18. ESTHER CHOSEN QUEEN INSTEAD OF VASHTI.

1–4. *The king, on the advice of his courtiers resolves to select a successor to Vashti from virgins to be brought from all parts of his dominions.*

1. was pacified: Heb. 'had subsided'; so vii. 10. The verb = 'to sink,' and occurs in Gen. viii. 1 ('and the waters *abated*').

he remembered Vashti: with remorse for what he had done and with renewed affection. He was evidently minded, if possible, to take her back. Many ways of evading this, the natural sense, have been proposed. The LXX inserts the negative ('remembered *not*').

2. The courtiers wished to make the king's resolve irrevocable, as they had counselled the rejection of Vashti. Hence they propound their scheme for securing another queen.

Why did not the king forthwith raise to the now vacant queenship one of his concubines (see ver. 14) or another wife—if he had one?

king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: and let the king 3
appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of [a] Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them: and let the maiden which pleaseth the king 4
be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

[a] Heb. *Hege*.

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king's servants: see on i. 3.

3. officers: the Heb. noun is cognate with the verb which governs it ('let the king *appoint men appointed*'), and in Neh. xi. 9 (see on) is translated 'overseer.' In Nehemiah the LXX has *episcopos* (our 'bishop'), but in the present passage *komarkhas*, or 'village chiefs,' is the Greek word used.

provinces: see on i. 1.

virgins: this specification was more needful then, and in the East is still, than with us.

Shushan the palace: see on i. 2 and especially on Neh. i. 2.

house of the women: the harem or *gunaikeion*, situated (as recent excavations go to show) at the north-west of the complex of royal buildings. In ver. 8 it is called the 'king's house,' an expression which in ver. 9 and iv. 13 stands for the palace buildings as a whole, though in ii. 13 and v. 1 it denotes the king's private apartments.

Hegai: in the Hebrew we have in this chapter two spellings for this name, Hege and Hegai. The latter is correct.

chamberlain: i. e. eunuch (see on i. 10). Hegai could not have had access to these women nor Shaashgaz to the concubines (ver. 14) had they not been eunuchs.

things for purification: lit. 'things to rub with,' i. e. cosmetics, specified in ver. 12. These had to be applied for a whole year before the several candidates presented themselves for the royal hand (see ver. 12), as if twelve months could do more than twelve days or even hours towards the desired end (attractiveness).

4. and let the maiden . . . be queen: on the improbability of such a method of choosing a queen see Introd., p. 298.

5 There was a certain Jew in Shushan the palace, whose
name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei,
6 the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who had been carried
away from Jerusalem with the captives which had been

5–7. *Short account of Mordecai and his cousin Esther.* This section is introduced here because the story cannot go further forward without it. In the Hebrew, where connexion is generally indicated (by 'waw-consecutive,' &c.), there is nothing joining this paragraph with what precedes, suggesting that we have something brought in *ab extra*, though this conclusion is not inevitable.

5. a Jew in Shushan the palace: there must have been a goodly number of Jews resident in the fortified part of Susa (ix. 7) as well as in the city itself (ix. 15). Some would belong to the army, some would be in business (for the fortress quarters must have contained business houses), while others would act as artisans, servants, &c. 'The palace' is a very inaccurate and misleading translation.

Mordecai: usually explained as='a devotee of the (Babylonian) god Marduk' (=Merodach)[1]. This does not mean, however, that every man so called is what the name implies, for it was and is a frequent name among Jews. Every man called 'Thomas' is not a twin, nor is every one called 'Fisher' what the name implies.

the son of Jair, &c.: the word *ben* rendered 'son' means here as often (see on Ezra vii. 1) descendant, certainly in the case of Shimei, David's bitter foe (2 Sam. xvi. 5 ff.), and Kish the father of Saul (1 Sam. ix. 1, &c.), who are remote ancestors of Mordecai, as was also, perhaps, Jair. It is perhaps hinted that as Saul conquered Agag (1 Sam. xv) so his descendant Mordecai would compass the ruin of Haman the Agagite (iii. 1). Rawlinson and many others hold that the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather are meant, but the coincidence of the two latter names tells against this.

a Benjamite: referring, according to Hebrew usage, directly to Mordecai, though for that reason applicable to the other names

6. who had been, &c.: the word can belong to Mordecai only, as he is the main subject of verses 5 f. But in this verse the writer is guilty of an anachronism, for Jeconiah (=Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxiv. 4) and his fellow exiles were removed to Babylon in 598, 115 years before the period implied in the present context. For the real purpose of the story, however, this error makes no difference, though it is an artistic flaw. No doubt, in the mind of the writer, this Mordecai is identical with the man of that name mentioned in Ezra ii. 2 (see on) and Neh. vii. 7: so both Targums here.

[1] See p. 302.

carried away with [a] Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.
7 And he [b] brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maiden was fair and beautiful; and when her father and mother were dead, Mordecai took her for his own
8 daughter. So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken into the king's

[a] In 2 Kings xxiv. 6, *Jehoiachin.* [b] Heb. *nourished.*

Nebuchadnezzar: more correct would be *Nebuchodonnozor* (Haupt, cf. LXX and Babylonian). The older form (Jeremiah, Ezekiel) is *Nebuchadrezzar* (see Jer. xlix. 28, &c.); see on Ezra ii. 1.

7. he brought up: lit. 'he was foster-father to.' The same Heb. noun occurs in Num. xi. 12; Isa. xlix. 23.

Hadassah, that is, Esther: the names are explained largely, especially by the older authors, as denoting respectively 'myrtle' and 'star' (cf. Greek *aster*). Why in that case she received these names, and which of them is the original one, has been much disputed (see Ber.-Rys., and Paton). The latest scholars hold that we have the original of Esther in the name of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (cf. Ashtoreth), and that 'Hadassah' is merely a Babylonian title for this goddess: see Introd., p. 302 f.

his uncle's daughter: Mordecai and Esther were therefore cousins. The fact that they lived in such close relations—for he treated her as a daughter—has led many to think that Mordecai was a eunuch. If he was, this would explain the ease with which he gained access to the harem, and the fact that we never read of his wife; it would also go well with the view that he was a palace official (see on ver. 21).

fair: Heb. 'beautiful of form.'

beautiful: Heb. 'good looking'; lit. 'good as regards appearance.'

8–11. *Esther's entrance into the palace and the favourable impression she made.*

8. This verse (cf. ver. 3) takes up the thread of the narrative dropped for the purpose of bringing in verses 5–7.

was taken: the Heb. verb is the regular one for marrying a woman (Gen. iv. 19, vi. 2, &c.), and has in it no hint at the use of compulsion, though according to both Targums and Apoc. Esther

house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.
9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness
of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purifica-
tion, with her portions, and the seven maidens, which
were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and
he removed her and her maidens to the best place of
10 the house of the women. Esther had not shewed her
people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that

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xiv. 15, 18, Esther had been forced against her will into the royal harem. The natural impression which the O.T. story gives is that the two cousins are consenting parties all through, and rejoice exceedingly at Esther's success when she wins the queenship. All this, as also the fact that she eats the food of the heathen—for her nationality is kept a secret—prove that the Judaism of Mordecai and Esther are of a much less stringent type than, say, that of Ezra and Nehemiah, who did so much to put down marriages with aliens.

9. maiden: i. e. Esther.

pleased him: i. e. more than her rivals.

and he: i. e. the king, though he acted through his courtiers.

speedily (gave): so that her year of preparation might the sooner expire (see ver. 12).

things for purification: see on ver. 3.

portions: each virgin received not only cosmetics to perfume and beautify, but also special diet (see Dan. i. 5), though the special dieting is not mentioned in ver. 12. Esther does not seem to have made any objection to the food, though it could not have been such as Jewish laws permitted.

the (seven maidens) that each candidate had for attendants. Seven maidens each is implied in the use of the definite article.

meet: lit. 'seen'; then 'looked out,' and so 'selected.'

the king's house: here = palace complex, as in iv. 13. See on ii. 3.

10. Esther had not shewed (O.E. = reported, disclosed) her people (= nationality), **nor her kindred** (= family, and in particular her relationship to Mordecai).

To have been known as Jewish must at the time implied, if not at the time of writing, have meant some disadvantages. But to have concealed these things from the king, the eunuchs, and her rivals required extraordinary adroitness, but, if true, exhibit but little steadfastness of principle on the part of Esther or her cousin. See on verses 8 f. and on vi. 10.

she should not shew it. And Mordecai walked every 11
day before the court of the women's house, to know how
Esther did, and what should become of her. Now 12
when the turn of every maiden was come to go in to king
Ahasuerus, after that it had been done to her according
to the law for the women, twelve months, (for so were
the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six
months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet
odours, and with the things for the purifying of the
women,) then in this wise came the maiden unto the king, 13

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11. walked: Heb. 'used to walk.'

before: i.e. on the eastern side of the court: see on Neh. xii. 31. Perhaps at the time of the rising of the sun each day the inmates of the palace, male and female, would congregate for purpose of worship on the sunrise side of the royal buildings. The two cousins might thus easily meet daily, though silently recoiling from the sun-worship around. Mordecai's anxiety to learn of the state and prospects of his cousin must have been great. One must not imagine that among the Persians in those days the relations between the sexes was so strictly guarded as in the modern Orient.

12–15. *How the king made the selection.*

The candidates passed in turns (how the order was settled we do not know) night by night into the king's room, just as was done by the wives of Pseudo-Smerdis[1], with which and with the present narrative compare the Introduction to the *Arabian Nights*, the tale of Shahriar[2].

12. twelve months: as if a year's perfuming, &c., could effect more for the beautifying of the virgins than say that of twelve hours!

myrrh: Heb. *mōr*, the same word.

sweet odours: Heb. *bosem* (in the plural), i.e. 'balsam' (with inserted 'l').

and (with the things) = 'even,' the words that follow merely summing up the cosmetics aforementioned.

ver. 13 joins on to the beginning of ver. **12**, repeated here after the interruption following 12[a]. Render, '12 Now whenever the turn of each girl was to go in to the king, &c. 13 Even (when) in this (her turn) the girl came to the king, whatever she used to

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[1] Herod. iii. 69. [2] See Additional Notes, p. 363.

whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out
14 of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the
evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into
the second house of the women, to the custody of
Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the
concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except
the king delighted in her, and that she were called by
15 name. Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of
Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for
his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she
required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain,
the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther
obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked
16 upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into
his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month
17 Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the

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demand (cosmetics, jewellery, &c.) it was the custom to give her to take (lit. enter) with her out of,' &c. Each girl was helped in every way to make herself as winsome as she could.

Note in ver. 13 the explicit differentiation between the house of the women and that of the king. See on ver. 3 and on v. 1.

14. On the morning each candidate had to leave the king's room and to pass into the concubines' department, not repeating her visit to the king unless specially requested. In the *Arabian Nights*' tale each maid had to be killed in the morning.

Shaashgaz: Haupt says we should read 'Shashegaz.'

chamberlain: render 'eunuch': see on ver. 3 and i. 10.

15. Esther's personal charms were so great, and she was so conscious of them (or was it her modesty?) that she desired no special aid to recommend her to the king.

Abihail: in LXX here and ix. 29 Aminadab (=Abinadab).

16–18. *Esther chosen as queen.*

16. was taken: i. e. as wife (so Targ.(1)): see on ver. 8.

his house royal: lit. 'the house of his kingdom'=the house of the king in ver. 13.

the tenth month: i. e. Dec.–Jan.: see on Ezra x. 16.

Tebeth: a Babylonian name, nowhere else mentioned in the O. T.

in the seventh year: i e. in 478, four years after Vashti's

king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king made a 18
great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a [a] release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the [b] bounty of the king. And when the virgins were gathered together the second 19

[a] Heb. *rest.* [b] Heb. *hand.*

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deposition (i. 3). It was during this period that Xerxes conducted his ill-starred expedition into Greece, the battle of Salamis taking place in 480. Some ascribe the delay in making the selection to this expedition. The writer, however, viewing those years in the distance, sees nothing going on in Susa but this continual testing of virgins. We must remember that we are reading a romance and not strict history.

17. above all the women: i. e. above the concubines (and wives?) already in the harem and the virgins who were Esther's rivals.

crown: see on i. 12.

18. a great feast: Josephus says 'a wedding feast.' Great events were celebrated and distinguished persons honoured by banquets then as now.

release: Heb., 'a causing to rest' (the root in the Heb. for *Noah*), but from what? Probably from prison (see 1 Macc. x. 33; Matt. xxvii. 15), not from taxes (1 Macc. x. 29), which in Persia were unknown, nor from military service (as LXX, Targ. (1) assume).

gifts: the Hebrew is singular, though it may bear a plural sense. The same word in Jer. xl. 5 is translated 'present'; in Amos v. 11 it means 'tribute,' which may be its sense here, 'he gave (back) the tribute,' though Persian custom is against this.

bounty: see on i. 7.

19–23. *Mordecai exposes a plot to take the king's life.*

19. Render, 'And when the virgins were being gathered together, then Mordecai,' &c., referring back to ver. 8.

the second time: omit. The one Hebrew word so translated was inserted from a view of the passage which assumed that another assembly of girls took place in addition to that spoken of in verses 8 ff. We have, however, in verses 19–23 an episode which took place while the virgins were being brought in (verses 8 ff.). Haupt omits the verse on account of its difficulty,

20 time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Esther had
not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai
had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of
Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.
21 In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two
of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those
which kept the [a]door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands
22 on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to
Mordecai, who shewed it unto Esther the queen; and
23 Esther told the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name. And

[a] Heb. *threshold.*

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and if the words 'the second time' are kept, Haupt's suggestion is the only possible one.

the king's gate: a favourite resort of Mordecai's (see ver. 21, &c.). It stood probably at the entrance to the palace grounds, and, like city gates in the East commonly, it was a place of public resort and perhaps the place where justice was administered. Some infer, from the fact that Mordecai is often mentioned in connexion with it, that he was a government official (see on ver. 7 and cf. vi. 10).

20. Esther had not yet, &c.: a more literal rendering would be, 'Esther was not one that declared,' &c., i. e. during these proceedings she used to keep silent about, &c.

shewed . . . kindred: see on ver. 10.

21. In those days: i. e. while the girls were being brought (verses 8 ff. and 19).

chamberlains: render, 'eunuchs': see on i. 10.

Bigthan: called in i. 10 'Bigtha' and in vi. 2 'Bigthana.'

door: Heb. 'threshold.' These two men had apparently charge of the king's sleeping-room, and could easily compass his death. According to both Targs., the plan hit upon was to put a venomous reptile in the king's cup when he was about to drink. As a matter of fact, this Xerxes lost his life in 465 through a conspiracy of the kind, as did also Artaxerxes III (Ochus) in 338.

were wroth: why? No one knows, though the Targumists, commentators, &c., offer innumerable explanations: see Berth., Ryss., and Paton.

to lay hands on: i. e. to put to death: so iii. 6, ix. 2.

22. was known: better, 'came to be known.' How? We are not told, though here again many surmises have been offered.

shewed: see on ver. 10.

in Mordecai's name: if the queen mentioned her cousin's

when inquisition was made of the matter, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman **3**

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name when disclosing the affair to the king—and the words can mean nothing else—how could the king have so soon forgotten all about it, especially as Persian kings were proverbial for the way in which they rewarded outstanding merit among their soldiers?

23. hanged: better 'impaled' (so Streane, Haupt, &c.), this being the mode of capital punishment prevalent in Persia at the time[1]: cf. 'on a tree'; see on Ezra vi. 11. Death by hanging or strangulation is but twice mentioned in the Bible, and in both cases as a mode of suicide: see 2 Sam. xvii. 23 and Matt. xxvii. 5; cf. Nahum ii. 13, where the same Hebrew verb occurs as in the former passage. According to Joseph., Jero., and perhaps the Syr., 'crucified' is the proper translation, but this was the Roman mode of capital punishment. Paton defends the ordinary rendering **hanged**, relying chiefly on v. 14 (see on). But up to the present (1909) no example has been seen on the ancient monuments of Babylon, Assyria, or Persia, of hanging by the neck or of fastening to a cross.

the book of the chronicles: the Hebrew name for the canonical 'Books of Chronicles,' though of course the latter books are not here meant. The Hebrew means literally 'the book of daily acts,' i. e. 'the diary.' Such annals were preserved by the kings of Persia[2], of Assyria, Babylonia, and also[3] of Israel. Herod. says that the Persian kings in such records preserved the names of men who deserved special honour[4]. This book is referred to by a longer name in vi. 1 f. See Mal. iii. 16; cf. Isa. iv. 31; Ezek. xiii. 9; Phil. iv. 3, &c.; and on Ps. cxxxix. 16 (*Century Bible*).

iii. 1–iv. 17. HAMAN'S PROMOTION TO BE GRAND VIZIER AND HIS PLOT TO DESTROY THE JEWS.

1–6. *Mordecai refusing to bow before the new prime minister, the latter formed a design to destroy the Jews.*

1. After these things: an indefinite statement, implying some time between 478 (ii. 16) and 473 (ver. 7).

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[1] See Herod. iii. 159, iv. 43; Layard, *Nin. and Bab.*, p. 355 n. The latter says this mode of punishment obtained in Turkey in his own time.

[2] Ezra iv. 15 (see on), Her. vii. 100, &c.

[3] 1 Kings xiv. 19, &c. [4] viii. 25.

the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with
2 him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed down, and did reverence to Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai
3 bowed not down, nor did him reverence. Then the king's

Haman: originally, according to Jensen, the name of an Elamite deity (*Humman* or *Humban*): see Introd., p. 303, and Ber.-Rys., Paton.

Hammedatha: a compound (Jensen thinks) of Haman and a verb: perhaps = 'a gift of Haman' (='Humman'): cf. 'Theodore' and 'Nathaniel.'

the Agagite: i. e. probably a descendant of Agag (1 Sam. xv), and therefore an Amalekite: see on ii. 5. It is strange, though perhaps where nationalites were so mixed not impossible, that an Amalekite should have been Persia's prime minister. In Great Britain a Jew (Disraeli) was prime minister not very long ago. There are many other explanations of 'Agagite': see Ber.-Rys., and Paton.

set his seat: render, 'gave him a position.' The word rendered 'seat' (*kissê*) means 'seat,' then 'throne' (see on i. 12), and then, as here, 'position.'

above all, &c.: i. e. he made him Grand Vizier, who had immeasurably greater power than our prime minister.

2. the king's servants: see on i. 3.

bowed down (= fell on their knees) **and did reverence** = (prostrated themselves) in the true Oriental fashion before superiors and in the manner of modern Mohammedans during prayer.

2b–6. *Mordecai refuses to join the multitude in bending, &c., before Haman. Haman's anger and scheme of revenge.* What objection could Mordecai, though a Jew (ver. 4), have to performing the acts of respect and submissiveness for the chief minister which other subjects performed, and which accord with the ways of Orientals to-day? The commentators (Rawlinson, &c.), Jewish and Christian, say it was Divine homage that Haman demanded. Probably, however, the writer brought in this incident as a literary necessity. It was needful in some way to explain the rivalry and ill-feeling between Mordecai and Haman, and to make Mordecai deny to the new prime minister the usual homage, whatever the implied cause, seemed a fit means towards this end.

the king had so commanded: in ordinary cases no such command was necessary. Perhaps Haman had risen from a low family, and a special command was needed to secure the recognition ordinarily shown to holders of the office.

servants, that were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment? Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto 4
him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's [a] matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when 5
Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not down, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. But he 6
thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai. In the first month, which is the month 7

[a] Or, *words*

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3. the king's gate: see on ii. 19.

4. matters: perhaps this is a plural of intensity, 'great affair' = 'strange conduct.' The R.Vm. 'words' may be safely ignored, though the Hebrew allows it.

(whether Mordecai's matters) **would stand:** better 'could stand,' i. e. judicial examination, whether or not the law allowed such conduct.

6. he thought scorn, &c.: Wildeboer (followed by Kent and Paton) well expresses the sense of the Hebrew, 'held it beneath his dignity to,' &c.

sought to destroy, &c.: Rawlinson and others have pointed to many Oriental parallels to this projected butchery of the Jews, as the great massacre of the Magi (*Magophonia*) at the accession of Darius I, and the slaughter of the Scythians about a century earlier. One may refer to the butchery of whole hordes of Jews in quite recent times in Russia and elsewhere. If, however, Haman or any other prime minister had schemed a wholesale massacre of Jews he would have set about it at once. But it was necessary for the dénouement of the tale that Mordecai and Esther should have time and opportunity for the overthrow of Haman's project, and that could be secured by introducing the incident about the lot, though the writer could not have had much faith in such things. The delay was literally 'allotted.'

7–11. *The king agrees to Haman's proposal and promises help towards realizing it.*

7. the first month . . . Nisan: see on Ezra x. 9, 17.

Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and

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the twelfth year, &c.: i. e. in 473.

they (cast Pur, &c.): who? In Hebrew the verb is singular, and some make Haman the subject. It is, however, probably a case of the impersonal construction so common in Hebrew ('one cast,' &c. = 'Pur . . . was cast'): see p. 103.

Pur: whatever the etymology of the word (see Introd., pp. 301 ff.), the writer takes it to mean 'lot,' which is all one need to know in order to follow the thread of the tale.

the lot: better 'lots.' In Hebrew the singular is constantly used for the plural; it indicates the thing meant. Or we have perhaps the generic article; cf. 'the lion.'

Divination by lot (arrows, strips of wood, or bits of paper, pebbles, &c.) was very widespread in ancient times,[1] prevails still among people of low culture, and is not dead even in Great Britain among professedly Christian people.

For what purpose was the present lot taken? Almost certainly to find out a lucky day for the horrid deed which Haman had in mind: so nearly all commentators. Paton, however, argues that the object was to ascertain a lucky day on which to lay the project before the king, and he refers to the fact that, as soon as a day had been pronounced lucky, Haman went in to the king (ver. 8). But Haman wished to present himself with the decision of the lot not only as to the day, but also as to the feasibility of the fact itself. To fix upon a day for the slaughter carried with it approval of the slaughter itself. Besides the day settled by lot (see on ver. 7) was also that for the massacre (see ver. 13 and cf. ix. 18 f.).

How was the lot taken? Probably as follows: There would be twelve lots, marked 1 to 12, put into a box; whichever of these was taken out was to decide the month, in the present case the twelfth month (Adar). Then there would be thirty lots, marked 1 to 30, put into the same or a larger box; whichever was taken out was to decide the day, in the present case the thirteenth day (see ver. 13).

The words 'from day to day and from month to month' refer merely to the succession of numbers indicating months and days. Paton holds that on every month and day from the first month (ver. 7) the lot was taken afresh to know if the day in question was *the* one for visiting the king. In that case they were drawing lots for some eleven months!

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[1] See *Magic, Divination, and Demonology among the Hebrews and Related Peoples*, by the present writer, p. 75, &c.

from month to month, *to* the twelfth *month*, which is the month Adar. And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, 8
There is a certain people scattered abroad and [a] dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from *those of* every people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not [b] for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, 9
let it be written that they be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those

[a] Or, *separated* [b] Or, *meet for the king*

***to* the twelfth *month* . . . Adar:** read and render (with LXX, Old Lat., and virtually all modern scholars), 'And the lot fell for the 13th (LXX 14th) of the month, Adar.' The mistake in the LXX (14th day) may be due to the influence of ix. 19. The M.T. gives no sense.

Adar: see on Ezra vi. 15 and x. 9. Paton is wrong when he says that Adar is mentioned only in Esther.

8. scattered abroad: living among people of all nationalities.

dispersed: render, as in the R.Vm., 'separated': they keep apart, do not eat with or as others, will not intermarry, &c. The description applies to the Jews of to-day. When due to religious principles the separateness of the Jew is to his credit rather than the reverse. No people on the face of the earth have paid or pay more dearly for their religion than the Jews.

their laws are diverse: i. e. their religious laws.

neither keep they the king's laws: i. e. when opposed to their religion. The same could be said of Christian martyrs.

not for the king's profit: probably better than the R.Vm. The verb occurs in v. 13 ('is not enough for me'), vii. 4 (end) ('not have compensated,' see on), and is restored (?) in i. 22 (see last note on).

9. If it please the king: see on Neh. ii. 5.

written: i. e. written down as a decree.

I will pay, &c.: evidently out of his own pocket, not out of the proceeds of the Jewish massacre. There is no condition attached.

ten thousand talents of silver: about £3,360,000 (see on Ezra viii. 26), rather more than two-thirds of the annual revenue of the Persian empire. Rawlinson calls attention to Pythius, who offered this same king (not Darius, as Paton says) a gift of money equal to about 4½ millions sterling[1]—a sum regarded, however, by Grote as fabulous and false. But the requirements of

[1] Her. vii. 28.

that have the charge of the *king's* business, to bring it
10 into the king's treasuries. And the king took his ring
from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of
11 Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the
king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee,
the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to
12 thee. Then were the king's [a] scribes called in the first
month, on the thirteenth day thereof, and there was
written according to all that Haman commanded unto the
king's satraps, and to the governors that were over every

[a] Or, *secretaries*

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the story and what it is intended to teach do not necessitate our taking these details quite seriously. Nöldeke thinks that this exact sum has been made up by a process of Rabbinical calculation: see E.B. ii. 1401, and Targ. (2) here and on iv. 1.

those that have charge of the *king's* business: i. e. those who had charge of the revenues: see ix. 3 and cf. 2 Kings xii. 11 and Neh. xi. 16, 22, &c.

10. ring: better 'signet ring.' Signatures are still made in the East by seals, not by pens. By handing over to Haman his seal he gave him the right of signing documents and of thus enforcing his own authority in the name of the king (see viii. 2, 8; Gen. xli. 42; 1 Macc. vi. 15). The seal was sometimes suspended from the neck by a cord and sometimes attached to a cylindrical framework held in the hand.

the Jews' enemy: to be an Agagite meant this: see on vii. 6.

11. The king promises men and money for the gruesome task. It is strange, if true, that Xerxes should consent to help in butchering his Jewish subjects, including those in Palestine!

12-15. *The decree sent forth throughout the king's dominions.*

12. scribes: they must have been very numerous or very learned to be able to write in the script and language of each nationality embraced in the Persian empire of the day: see on i. 22.

They began their work on the thirteenth day of the first month (Nisan), just eleven months before the massacre was ordered to take place (ver. 13). For this long interval see on ver. 6.

satraps: the heads of the twenty Persian provinces: see on i. 1 and on Ezra viii. 36.

governors: heads of sub-satrapies, such as Zerubbabel and Nehemiah of Judah: see on i. 1 and on Ezra viii. 36.

province, and to the princes of every people; to every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and it was sealed with the king's ring. And letters were sent by posts into all the king's pro- 13
vinces, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. A copy of the writing, [a] that the 14
decree should be given out in every province, was published unto all the peoples, that they should be ready

[a] Or, *to be given out for a decree*

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princes: see on Ezra ix. 1.

13. posts: Heb. 'runners,' a sense surviving in '*post*-haste': cf. Job ix. 25, 'my days are swifter than a *post*.' From denoting the fixed positions between which couriers conveyed letters, &c., it came to be used for the couriers themselves. In the present case horses do not seem to have been used, as speed was no object. Contrast what is said in viii. 10. See on i. 22.

to destroy, &c.: note the aggregation of synonyms common in legal documents: cf. viii. 11.

thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month: see on verses 7, 12. The LXX (Ap. Esther xiii. 6, in the copy of the king's letter) has 'fourteenth day,' but in ix. 1 it has 'thirteenth.' Modern Jews keep the fourteenth and fifteenth, perhaps under the influence of the Passover Feast, which begins Nisan 14th.

[Ap. Esther xiii. 1–7. The king's letter. This is as anti-Jewish a document as was ever penned. In it the Jews are spoken of as 'a malignant people with laws differing from those of all other peoples; they set at defiance the king's authorities, are all men's foes, and work mischief of every kind. Wherefore it is they, their wives and children, must be consigned to Hades.']

14. copy: see on Ezra iv. 11, where the same Persian word is used with the difference of one letter (*t* for *r*). Probably we should render, 'a copy of (a part of) the writing; let the decree be given out in every province and let it be published to all the peoples,' &c. The words 'copy of the writing' introduce the very words of the official letter to Artaxerxes in Ezra iv. 11 (see on).

15 against that day. The posts went forth in haste by the
king's commandment, and the decree was given out in
Shushan the palace: and the king and Haman sat down
to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

4 Now when Mordecai knew all that was done, Mordecai
rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and
went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a
2 loud and a bitter cry: and he came even before the

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that day: the thirteenth of Adar (see ver. 13).

15. While the couriers hurried to make the proclamation in the provinces the decree was publicly announced in the fortress of Susa. Note the contrast: the king and his minister were sitting to their wine (or to a banquet, Paton) as unconcerned over the impending massacre of Jews as Nero was chanting the 'Fall of Troy' and admiring the beautiful (*sic*) sight of Rome ablaze; on the other hand, the city (or at least the Jewish element in it) was perplexed! See on viii. 15.

IV–VII

THROUGH THE INTERVENTION OF ESTHER THE THREATENED SLAUGHTER OF JEWS IS AVERTED AND HAMAN IMPALED ON THE TREE PREPARED BY HIS INSTRUCTIONS FOR MORDECAI.

1–3. *Great lamentation of Mordecai and other Jews.*

knew: better 'got to know.' How? See on i. 22.

all that was done: including the part played by Haman; see ver. 7.

rent his clothes (see on Ezra ix. 3), **and put on sackcloth with ashes** (see Dan. ix. 3; Jonah iii. 6), each act an expression of grief; the coming together of all indicates intense grief.

sackcloth: a coarse dark cloth made from the hair of goats and camels. 'Haircloth' would be a better rendering. The Hebrew word is *sack* (whence 'sackcloth'), but its derivation and meaning are very uncertain.

with ashes: the construction is that called a zeugma, the reader having to supply the appropriate verb. The Hebrew has simply 'put on haircloth and ashes,' i. e. 'and strewed ashes (on the head).' The versions supply the verb understood, but the Hebrew does not require it.

These expressions of grief are explained (by Schwally) as survivals of the cult of the dead.

2. even before: better (as Hebrew) 'as far as before.'

king's gate: for none might enter within the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whither- 3
soever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and [a] many lay in sackcloth and ashes. And Esther's maidens and her chamberlains 4
came and told it her; and the queen was exceedingly grieved: and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take his sackcloth from off him: but he received it not. Then called Esther for Hathach, one of the king's 5
chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and charged him to go to Mordecai, to know what this was, and why it was. So Hathach went forth to 6

[a] Heb. *sackcloth and ashes were spread under many.*

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for none might, &c.: because used as a sign of mourning during a death, the haircloth came to be regarded as unclean, as was everything connected in any way with a dead body.

the king's gate: see on ii. 19.

3. great mourning: the acts mentioned were probably religious ones—confession, prayer, &c.

fasting: this has bulked largely in the religions of the ancient world, especially among the Chinese, Hindus, and Persians; to a less degree among the Semites, and still less did it prevail among the classical nations. In the O. T. it is invariably the accompaniment of prayer, and in ver. 16 (see on) the fasting spoken of really includes prayer.

many: Heb. 'the many,' which, as in Greek = 'the majority,' 'most.'

lay in sack (= hair) **cloth,** &c.: the sense is 'lay on a haircloth strewn with ashes.'

4–9. *Esther ascertains the cause of Mordecai's grief.*

4. maidens . . . chamberlains (= eunuchs): an Oriental queen would be sure to have maidens (see on ii. 9) and eunuchs (see on i. 10) to wait on her.

she sent raiment, &c., to enable Mordecai to enter the place that he might explain matters: see on ver. 2.

5. Hathach: LXX *Akharthaion*; Targ.(1), Talm., 'Daniel.'

chamberlains: see on i. 10.

what this was, &c.: what the haircloth, &c., meant—a sign of mourning, and what was the cause of the mourning.

Mordecai unto the broad place of the city, which was
7 before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all
that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of the
money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's
8 treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. Also he gave
him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given
out in Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther,
and to declare it unto her; and to charge her that she
should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto
him, and to make request before him, for her people.
9 And Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mor-
10 decai. Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him
11 a message unto Mordecai, *saying*: All the king's servants,
and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that
whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the

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6. broad place: see on Ezra x. 9.

the king's gate: see on ii. 19.

7. the exact sum, &c.: see on iii. 9 and on Neh. viii. 8 ('exactly'). The Heb. noun here used occurs besides only in x. 2.

8. the (better 'a') **copy** (see on iii. 14) . . . **given out in Shushan** (see iii. 15): it is probable that the king had a good number of copies prepared to be exhibited at important centres and shown to important personages. But of course printing, typing, and modern methods of copying were unknown in those far-off days. Had men then some method of multiplying other than the drudgery of writing separate copies?

the (copy): the Hebrew can, and here does, mean 'a,' though the absence of the article in Hebrew is no proof in itself that the noun ('copy') is indefinite, for in Semitic, as in Keltic, a noun, though definite, drops its article before a genitive.

10–12. *Esther's first answer: she could do nothing.*

11. No one was allowed to enter the king's inner apartments unbidden. Esther therefore could not present herself before the king. Herodotus[1], however, says that any subject could gain access to the royal presence if he previously announced himself and was not an objectionable personage. Either the writer is ignorant of

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[1] iii. 118, 140.

king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. And they told to Mordecai 12
Esther's words. Then Mordecai bade them return answer 13
unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, 14
then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall

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court etiquette in the time of Xerxes or he intentionally sacrifices accuracy to the desire of magnifying Esther's courage in visiting the king notwithstanding the danger involved.

inner court: cf. 'the outer court,' vi. 4. From the former the king could be seen on his throne (see v. 1).

the golden sceptre: see v. 2. As represented on the monuments, it resembled a long tapering rod with a headlike ornament at one end and a loop at the other. Xenophon says that three hundred sceptre-bearers attended the elder Cyrus.

thirty days: had Esther's place in the king's affections been taken by another? v. 2 suggests a negative answer.

(and) **they** (told): read (with the versions), 'he' (i.e. Hathach).

13 f. *Mordecai's remonstrance.* If the royal edict is executed neither Esther nor her father's house (Mordecai) will be able to escape.

13. Think not with thyself: lit. 'imagine not in thy soul' (=self).

king's house: here the palace complex, as in ii. 9; see on ii. 3.

14. relief: lit. 'breadth,' 'spaciousness.' Among the Semites and also in Persian, Sanskrit, &c., a state of comfort is conceived as one of 'roominess'; the contrary state as one of 'straitness.' The Hebrew verb rendered 'to deliver,' which is cognate to 'Joshua' and 'Jesus,' means literally 'set at large[1].'

from another place: i.e. from God: see Jer. xxxi. 35–37. The Divine name is, however, carefully avoided. The two Targs.,

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[1] See *Brief Studies in Psalm Criticism*, by the present writer in *Orientalische Studien* (Nöldeke Memorial), vol. ii. 648 f.

perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to
15 the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade
16 them return answer unto Mordecai, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the
17 law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Joseph., and Lat. insert 'God.' Perhaps, however (so Siegfried), the writer has in mind deliverance from another nation—Rome. See 1 Macc. viii. 17, xii. 1.

for such a time as this: i. e. to deliver.

15 f. *Esther's second reply: she will stake all for her people.*

16. the Jews that are present: see on i. 5. From the fact that the Jews at Susa could put to death three hundred men (see ix. 15) it may be inferred that their number was not inconsiderable.

fast (=pray) **ye for me**: see on ver. 3 (**fasting**). The word 'prayer' seems studiously avoided, though the thing is implied, because the former—the word—would too obviously suggest God: see on ver. 13 (**another place**).

three days: parts only of three days (i. e. some thirty-six hours) may be intended: see Matt. xii. 40; cf. xxviii. 1. If we assume this, the force of what the older commentators say—Esther trusted in God, not in her beauty, or she would not endanger the latter by long fasting—is (as Wild., &c., say) diminished.

if I perish, I perish = 'what must be must be': see Gen. xliii. 14 for a parallel expression.

17. *Mordecai assents to Esther's request.*

went (his way): the Hebrew verb (cognate with *'Ibri* = Hebrew, one that has *crossed* (the Jordan or the Euphrates)), means primarily 'to cross,' 'pass over'; then 'to transgress,' and then, as Gen. xviii. 5, and here (perhaps also in Neh. ii. 14, see on) it = 'to depart' (i. e. to pass over the distance before one). Jewish expositors, however (the Targs., &c.), explain the verb as = 'to transgress,' understanding that Mordecai transgressed the law by fasting during the Passover (Nisan 14), when there should be only rejoicing. But did he fast during Passover?

[Ap. Esther xiii. 8–18, Mordecai's prayer; xiv. 1–19, Esther's

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put 5
on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the
king's house, over against the king's house: and the king
sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against
the entrance of the house. And it was so, when the king 2
saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she
obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to
Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther
drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. Then 3
said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther?

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prayer. In these prayers the Divine names 'Lord,' 'God,' 'God of Abraham,' 'King of the Gods,' &c., occur with more frequency than is the case in other books, suggesting, what other considerations make practically certain—that the purpose of the apocryphal additions is to make some amends for the absence of the religious element in the canonical parts of the book.]

V

1 f. *The king receives Esther.*

1. on the third day: i. e. since the fasting began (iv. 16: see on). This shows that the fasting did not last three days.

put on her royal apparel: this rendering assumes the insertion of a word (=apparel) found in the versions but lost in the M.T.

stood: better, 'came to a stand.' The Hebrew expression really='entered and stopped': see Joshua x. 17; Judges ix. 33.

inner court: see on iv. 11. In this court was situated the entrance to the pillared hall at the opposite end of which sat the king on his throne. As the queen entered the inner court the king could probably see her through the doorway.

king's house: the king's private apartments; see on ii. 3. Dieulafoy, the distinguished French explorer of Susa, says that here the throne-room is alone meant.

over against has reference to Esther.

2. held out . . . the golden sceptre: see on iv. 11.

touched: Vulg. 'kissed.'

3–8. *The queen, encouraged by the king, makes two requests: that the king should accept invitations to dine with her on two separate occasions.*

Since the king has offered much more than that, why does not the queen at once ask for the life of Haman and a reversal of the

and what is thy request? it shall be given thee even to the
4 half of the kingdom. And Esther said, If it seem good unto
the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the
5 banquet that I have prepared for him. Then the king
said, Cause Haman to make haste, that it may be done
as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to
6 the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king
said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy
petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is
thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be
7 performed. Then answered Esther, and said, My petition
8 and my request is; if I have found favour in the sight of
the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and
to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to
the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do

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cruel edict? Perhaps because the plan of the romance required delay: historical probability is sacrificed to literary necessity. The book must be judged from its character and aim—a romance expressing and helping to sustain the patriotism of the people.

3. What wilt thou? lit., 'what is to thee?' i. e. as in Joshua xv. 13, 'what desirest thou?' 'it shall be given,' &c. Render, '(desirest thou anything) up to the half of the kingdom? Then it shall be given;' cf. Mark vi. 23. Note the exaggeration born of Oriental politeness. When to-day in the bazaars of Cairo or Jerusalem one begins to bargain, the vendor will often say, 'Oh, take it for nothing': see Gen. xxiii. 11.

4. If it seem good, &c.: see on Neh. ii. 5.

let the king and Haman come: the initials of the Hebrew words so translated make up the consonants of Yahweh (Jehovah) —vowel signs were unknown until some centuries after Christ. Jehring, Bullinger, and others say this Divine name is intended to be thus brought into the book, which otherwise has no name for God. But we have here merely an interesting coincidence.

6. banquet of wine: referring to the Persian custom of handing round fruit, and especially wine after the meal proper[1]: see vii. 2, 7; Dan. i. 5, 8.

even to, &c.: render as in ver. 3, changing the verb only.

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[1] Her. i. 133.

to-morrow as the king hath said. Then went Haman 9
forth that day joyful and glad of heart: but when
Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood
not up nor [a] moved for him, he was filled with wrath
against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman refrained him- 10
self, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends
and Zeresh his wife. And Haman recounted unto them 11
the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children,

[a] Or, *trembled before him*

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8. to-morrow: Esther wants the king and Haman to be her guests at another banquet, then she will tell the king her petition (see vii. 7 ff.). In itself the reticence of the queen after the king's double assurance (verses 4, 6) is inexplicable, but from the point of view of the tale one may understand it all. Of course some things said or done at the banquet might have had a close connexion with Esther's purpose, though that is not stated or hinted at.

9-13. *Haman's pride and envy.*

9. Mordecai in the king's gate (see on ii. 19): he had now evidently taken off his mourning garb: see on iii. 2.

nor moved, &c.: better, 'nor trembled before him,' as R.Vm.

10. Haman refrained himself, &c.: surely, however, he acted a wise part in consulting his wife and friends, though Paton thinks he ought at once to have wreaked his vengeance on Mordecai.

friends: in vi. 13 called 'wise men.'

Zeresh: the origin of this name is very uncertain. Some scholars (J. Oppert, &c.) derive it from the Persian *zer* = 'gold,' with ending *sh*, so 'golden': cf. the Greek names 'Chryses,' 'Chryseis.' Jensen, desiring a mythological explanation, has at different times sought the origin of the name in *Kirisha*, the name of an Elamite goddess, and in *Siris*, the name of a Babylonian goddess—both suppositions philologically impossible.

11. his riches: see on iii. 9.

the multitude of his children: he had ten sons (see ix. 7 ff.). The Targ.(1) says he had in all two hundred and eighteen sons. Among Jews[1], Persians[2], &c., it was thought a great honour to have many sons.

children: this is correct, though the Hebrew is the usual one for 'sons'; but we do not say 'sons of Israel.'

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[1] Gen. xxx. 20; Ps. cxxvii. 4 f. [2] Her. i. 136.

and all the things wherein the king had promoted him,
and how he had advanced him above the princes and
12 servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther
the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the
banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-
morrow also am I invited by her together with the king.
13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai
14 the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then said Zeresh his
wife and all his friends unto him, Let a [a] gallows be made
of fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak thou unto
the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go
thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the
thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to
be made.

6 On that night [b] could not the king sleep; and he com-

[a] Heb. *tree.* [b] Heb. *the king's sleep fled* from him.

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princes . . . servants: see on i. 3.

12. did let no man come: better, 'brought no one.' There is in the language an allusion to the custom of sending servant-men to bring guests: see v. 14; Luke xiv. 17.

13. availeth me nothing: lit. 'is not enough for me': see on i. 22 and iii. 8.

14. *The advice of Haman's wife and friends.*

gallows: better, 'stake or pole for impaling,' lit. 'tree'; then 'wood,' and so 'anything made of wood': see Gen. xl. 19; Joshua viii. 29, &c.; see on ii. 23. The length—about 80 feet—is very great, whether we understand gallows or stake: perhaps the text has suffered corruption. According to vii. 9, it could be put into Haman's house. The two Targs. and Joseph. make sundry interesting additions at this point: see Paton, 240 ff.

hanged: render 'impaled': see on ii. 23 and on Ezra vi. 11.

VI. 1–13. MORDECAI FOR HIS SERVICES TO THE KING HONOURED AND PROMOTED.

1 f. *The king, learning of Mordecai's loyal conduct, wishes to reward him.*

1. could not . . . sleep: see R.Vm. for literal rendering.

manded to bring the book of records of the chronicles,
and they were read before the king. And it was found 2
written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh,
two of the king's chamberlains, of those that kept the
[a] door, who had sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.
And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been 3
done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants
that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.
And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman 4
was come into the outward court of the king's house, to
speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows
that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants 5
said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And

[a] Heb. *threshold.*

Targs., LXX, &c., give as cause of the king's sleeplessness that God took his sleep away.

the book of records, &c.: see on ii. 23, where a shorter name occurs for the same. Such records would hardly supply the most entertaining reading for a sleepless monarch; but the moral of the tale hangs on the reading just now of these memorials.

and they were read: better, as in the Hebrew, 'they were being read,' i. e. through the whole night.

2. For this verse see on ii. 21.

3. It is passing strange that the king should have forsaken a benefactor who had saved his life: see on ii. 22 (end of note).

king's servants: see on i. 3.

4–12[a]. *Haman commanded to heap honours upon his great foe and rival.*

4. Who is in the court? Some high officials would be always in charge of the court. It happened that Haman was now one of them.

outward court: see iv. 11 and v. 1. The exact plan of the palace complex is a matter of uncertainty, though the excavations of Loftus, and especially of the French engineer Dieulafoy, have helped considerably to make a reconstruction possible. See Driver, 'Daniel,' *Camb. Bible*, p. 125.

Haman dares not enter the inner court uncommanded: see iv. 11 and v. 1.

for **hang . . . gallows** substitute 'impale . . . stake.'

6 the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in.
And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the
man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman
said in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do
7 honour more than to myself? And Haman said unto the
king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,
8 let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear,
and the horse that the king rideth upon, [a] and on the
9 head of which a crown royal is set: and let the apparel
and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the
king's most noble princes, that they may array the man

[a] Or, *and the crown royal which is set upon his head*

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5. come in: i. e. to the royal bedchamber.

6–9. Haman, saying 'in his heart' (=thinking) that he only could be meant, proposed the very highest distinctions for 'the man whom the king delights to honour.' Compare a contrary example in the Nathan-David incident reported 2 Sam. xii. 1 ff. ('Thou art the man').

6. The Talm. Meg., 7A, says that since the writer of Esther knew what was in Haman's heart he must have been inspired!

7 f. **For the man,** &c.: though the Hebrew can bear this construction (acc. of reference), we have here probably an anacoluthon, due to the king's haste in speaking, well imitated by the author: 'The man . . . honour, and let (for him) royal,' &c. The division of verses here is peculiarly unfortunate.

In 8 f. Haman enumerates the things which Persian kings were wont to consider marks of high honour for meritorious subjects: see on ii. 23.

8. which the king useth, &c.: render, according to the Hebrew, 'which the king has (actually) worn.' Plutarch[1] (cited by Wild.) refers to an incident in Persian history in which a king gives Tiribaz the coat which he had on, though he was not to wear it.

and on the head, &c.: horses wearing crownlike ornaments can be seen on the Assyrian monuments: see Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains* (5), ii. pp. 353, 356, &c.

The rendering of the R.Vm. (so Vulg. and Targ.(2) (not Targ.(1))), which is contrary to the Hebrew, is due to the difficulty of conceiving of 'crowned horses.' Modern discovery has removed this difficulty. A crown is not among Mordecai's decorations in verses 9 and 11.

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[1] *Artax.* 24.

withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and cause
him to ride on horseback through the street of the city,
and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the
man whom the king delighteth to honour. Then the 10
king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and
the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai
the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of
all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel 11
and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and caused him to
ride through the street of the city, and proclaimed before
him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king
delighteth to honour. And Mordecai came again to the 12
king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house, mourning
and having his head covered. And Haman recounted 13
unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that
had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh
his wife unto him, If Mordecai, before whom thou hast

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and proclaim, &c.: D. Cassel refers to a story in the *Arabian Nights,* in which a disgraced Arab chief is led through a city seated backwards on a camel, the people hurling at him epithets of reproach.

9. Cf. Gen. xli. 43. The writer (as Rosenthal first pointed out) seems to have before his mind the history of Joseph: see viii. 6.

10. Mordecai the Jew: a member of the doomed race, as was Esther, though the story has so far proceeded as if up to the present this was unknown: see on ii. 8–10.

that sitteth at the king's gate: favouring the view (so the versions, &c.) that Mordecai held an official position: see on ii. 19.

11. Haman obeyed the king's orders, though inwardly he must have rebelled.

12^{b}–13. *Haman returns home bitterly disappointed.*

12^{b}. head covered: a sign of grief: see vii. 8; 2 Sam. xv. 30; Jer. xiv. 4, &c.

13. his friends . . . his wise men: the same men are meant: see v. 10, 14.

If Mordecai, &c.: the words rest on the prediction that

begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.
14 While they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

7 So the king and Haman came [a] to banquet with Esther
2 the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be
3 performed. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition,
4 and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I

[a] Heb. *to drink.*

Israel should subdue Amalek, Haman being a member of that race: see on iii. 1 and see Exod. xvii. 16; Num. xxiv. 20; Deut. xxv. 17-19; 1 Sam. xv; 2 Sam. i. 8 ff.

14-VII. 4. Esther's second Banquet: Her great Request at last uttered—that she and her People may be spared.

14. the king's chamberlains = eunuchs.
hasted to bring Haman, &c.: see on v. 12.
the banquet: see v. 8, 12.

vii. **1. to banquet:** the verb is a denominative from the noun rendered 'feast' (= banquet): see on i. 3. The R.Vm. is altogether wrong, and is due to a superficial knowledge of Hebrew.

2. See v. 3, 6.
banquet of wine: see on v. 6.

3 f. Why does the queen hold back her real request until now? Perhaps to avoid divulging the fact of her being a Jewess, but see on v. 8.

4. we are sold, &c.: referring to Haman's bribe (iii. 9: see on).

But if, &c.: the sense of this very difficult clause appears to be—'for the (= our) distress (in such slavery) would not have

had held my peace, [a]although the adversary could not have compensated for the king's damage. Then spake 5
the king Ahasuerus and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, An adversary and an enemy, even 6
this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king arose in his wrath 7
from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then the king re- 8

[a] Or, *for our affliction is not to be compared with the king's damage*

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been (great) enough (to be removed) at the price of the king's loss (were we to be set free).' This rendering, including the bracketed words, can be all of it obtained from the Hebrew text without changing a single consonant and but one vowel, though in other parts of the book (see ver. 67) the word rendered 'distress' (lit. 'straitness': see on ii. 18) means 'adversary.' The next best of a dozen or more other renderings is that suggested by Oettli, which makes a slight change in the Hebrew: 'for the deliverance (from this bondage) would not be (great) enough (to be obtained) at the price of the king's loss.'

5–10. *Fall and punishment of Haman.*

5. The king and queen being now alone, the latter mentions by name the man to whom the project for massacring the Jews was due.

that durst presume in his heart: Heb., 'whose heart has filled him to do so': see Acts v. 3. In the psychology of the Hebrews the heart is the seat of the understanding, and so stands, as here, for the intellect itself.

6. An adversary . . . an enemy: the first word has reference to conduct—'one who acts against'; the second word to feeling—'one who has ill-will towards': so the Hebrew words may be differentiated.

7. arose: Heb., 'was rising.'

banquet of wine: see on v. 6.

and went: the words are implied (pregnantly) in the preposition, and need not be italicized.

palace garden: see on i. 5.

determined: Heb., 'completed': see 1 Sam. xx. 7; 2 Sam. xxv. 17; Ezek. v. 13 (for same verb).

turned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the couch whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he even force the queen before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's
9 face. Then said Harbonah, one of the chamberlains that were before the king, Behold also, the [a] gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who spake good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman.
10 And the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

[a] Heb. *tree.*

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8. Haman was fallen, &c.: the words mean simply that Haman was lying suppliantwise at the queen's feet in the manner of the country and time (see the monuments), and the king must have known this. Perhaps, however, he was glad to have any pretence for the punishment he intended to inflict upon Haman.

couch: see on i. 6.

they (=the eunuchs) **covered Haman's face,** just as the Macedonians, Romans, and apparently (as here) the Persians, did in the case of prisoners condemned to death: see the references in Rawlinson (Comm.); cf. vi. 12 (see on).

The king's **word** or question (**will he,** &c.) was equivalent to a sentence of death to those who knew him. Condamin, &c., depending on the LXX, slightly alter the M.T. reading, 'Haman's face grew red,' which is much simpler.

9. Harbonah: in i. 10 the final consonant is different.

chamberlains: see on i. 10.

gallows: see on ii. 23.

for Mordecai: LXX 'for impaling (hanging?) Mordecai.'

who spake good, &c.: see ii. 21 f., vi. 2 f.; cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 30; Jer. xxxii. 42.

in the house of Haman: how could an eighty-foot long pole be got into any one's house? See on v. 14.

Hang: better, 'impale': see on ii. 23.

10. Ps. vii. 15 f. was fulfilled in Haman's end.

hanged: render, 'impaled.'

pacified: see on ii. 1.

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of 8
Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And
Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what
he was unto her. And the king took off his ring, which 2
he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai.
And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. And 3
Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down
at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the
mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he
had devised against the Jews. Then the king held out 4
to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and

VIII.

1 f. *Mordecai succeeds to Haman's honours, wealth, and position.*

1. The king transfers Haman's property to the queen. In Persia the property of criminals doomed to death was confiscated by the state (see Her. iii. 129; Jos. *Antiq.* xi. 1, 3 and 4, 6).

the house of Haman: i. e. his property (see Gen. xxxix. 4, xliv. 1; 1 Kings xiii. 8; Job viii. 15).

for Esther had told, &c.: prior to this the king does not seem to have known that Esther and Mordecai were cousins (see ii. 7, 11. 22, iv. 4–16).

For his personal service in rescuing the king Mordecai had been (as Wild. remarks) rewarded (see vi. 6 ff.). The fresh honours and emoluments came to him through his connexion with the queen, though, of course, his previous conduct had predisposed the king towards him.

2. his ring: see on iii. 10. Through being invested with the signet ring Mordecai became Grand Vizier in succession to Haman.

Esther set, &c.: Mordecai became steward of Haman's estate, which must have been considerable (see iii. 9, 11, v. 11, ix. 10).

3–17. *Neutralizing of the anti-Jewish decree.*

3–6. *Esther's petition for the revocation of the decree.* Since 'Mordecai the Jew' was now prime minister, and the date fixed for the massacre was nearly a year off, there seems no urgent reason why Esther should again risk her life (see ver. 4) to plead for the withdrawal of the decree. Perhaps the aim is to exalt the patriotism of Esther.

3. fell down at his feet: see on vii. 8 and cf. v. 2.

the king held out . . . the golden sceptre: Esther must once

5 stood before the king. And she said, If it please the
king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and
the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing
in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised
by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which
he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's
6 provinces: for how can I endure to see the evil that
shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see
7 the destruction of my kindred? Then the king Ahasue-
rus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew,
Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and
him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid
8 his hand upon the Jews. Write ye also [a] to the Jews, as

[a] Or, *concerning*

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more have presented herself before the king unbidden (see on iv. 11). But the queen on the present occasion has begun to speak before the sceptre is held out to her.

5. If it please, &c.: see on Neh. ii. 7. The heaping up of adulatory epithets accords well with the ways of the East even now.

right: Heb. *kāsher* (cf. *kōsher*). In post-biblical Hebrew the word stands for what is in accordance with religious laws—food, drink, &c.

reverse: better, 'revoke': lit. 'cause to return.'

letters: see iii. 12–14, and for the word on i. 22.

devised by Haman, and therefore revocable. But the king cannot accept the argument. It was the king's decree and could not be altered.

6. Cf. Gen. xliv. 34, and see on vi. 9.

kindred: see ii. 10, 20.

7 f. The king consents, in his own way, to meet Esther's wishes. He cannot call back the edict which has gone forth, for no Persian law is alterable (i. 19), but he can and will send forth another decree which will make the other of no effect (ver. 11).

7. and to Mordecai the Jew: Esther and the king seem up to this time to be alone, and this clause, omitted by most of the versions, is rejected by many modern editors. But see ver. 8, 'Write *ye*,' &c.

8. Write ye, &c.: Mordecai, having now the king's seal, could himself, as Haman had done (iii. 11 f.), issue and send forth a new

it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.
Then were the king's scribes called at that time, in the 9
third month, which is the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the satraps, and the governors and princes of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. And he wrote in the 10
name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, riding on

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edict. Here Esther is associated with Mordecai. It looks as if some words between verses 7 f. had fallen out.

seal, &c.: see on iii. 10.

reverse: see on ver. 5.

9-14. *The measures taken by Mordecai.* See notes on iii. 12-15, where in describing the steps taken by Haman in issuing the first decree, the language and matter are much the same.

9. This verse is the longest in the hagiographa.

the third month . . . Sivan, &c.: i. e. two months and ten days later than the issue of Haman's decree (iii. 12 f.). What happened in the interval? See iv. 1 to viii. 2.

Sivan: one of the Babylonian month names (see on Ezra ix. 17), corresponding roughly to our May-June.

satraps . . . governors . . . princes: see on iii. 12.

hundred twenty and seven provinces: see on i. 1.

10. sealed: see on iii. 10.

letters: better, 'dispatches' (see on i. 22).

posts: see on iii. 13.

posts on horseback: better, 'mounted couriers.'

riding, &c.: render, 'riding on swift steeds bred of royal studs.' For this translation the only textual change necessary is the removal to the last place of the verse of the one word rendered above 'royal' (R.V. 'used in the king's service') which comes from a Persian noun *kshatra* ('kingdom').

[a]swift steeds that were used in the king's service, bred of
11 the stud: wherein the king granted the Jews which were
in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand
for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish,
all the power of the people and province that would
assault them, *their* little ones and women, and to take the
12 spoil of them for a prey, upon one day in all the provinces
of king Ahasuerus, *namely*, upon the thirteenth *day* of the
13 twelfth month, which is the month Adar. A copy of
the writing, [b]that the decree should be given out in every
province, was published unto all the peoples, and that

[a] Or, *swift steeds, mules,* and *young dromedaries*
[b] Or, *to be given out for a decree*

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used in the king's service: in Heb. one word = 'royal,' or literally 'belonging to the kingdom' (see above and ver. 14).

stud: judging from the Persian and Arabic the word in the M.T. = lit. 'mares.' Then it probably came, as here, to have a collective sense, as in the E.VV. In post-biblical Hebrew the word = 'mule,' but 'bred' of (='descended from') 'mules' gives no good sense.

11. *Contents of the new decree.* On the day fixed for the slaughter of the Jews, who were supposed in the first decree to calmly submit to their fate, the Jews were authorized to defend themselves, and in addition (see ver. 13) to take vengeance upon their foes.

their life = themselves (Semitic idiom).

to destroy, &c.: see on iii. 13.

12. See on iii. 13.

[Apoc. Esther xvi. 1-24. The letter of Artaxerxes. In this the king revokes the former decree (see on verses 7 f. and cf. i. 19), charges Haman with trying to get Persia into the hands of the Macedonians, while the Jews are said to live by very just laws and not to be evil doers. The letter bears on its face clear marks of its spuriousness, though it is followed by Josephus, &c. It is very different from the royal edicts of Ezra-Nehemiah: see p. 12 ff.]

13 f. See on iii. 14 f. Note how the tables are again turned. Mordecai's adversary has been impaled on the stake prepared for himself. In the new edict the Jews are not only to resist being massacred, but to turn upon their foes and massacre them—and they did (ix. 12, 16).

the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. So the posts that rode 14
upon swift steeds that were used in the king's service went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment; and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace. And Mordecai went forth from the presence 15
of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan shouted and was glad. The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour. 16
And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever 17
the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness and joy, a feast and a good day. And

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14. posts: see on iii. 13.

that rode upon: render, 'that rode upon swift royal steeds.'

being hastened, &c.: what need was there? See on verses 3-6.

Shushan the palace: see on i. 2 and on Neh. i. 2.

15-17. *Jewish feasting and rejoicing.*

15. royal apparel: see vi. 8, where the same Hebrew words are used though a different garment is intended. The grand vizier was allowed to dress much as the king did, though, according to Rawlinson, the king's own outer garb was purple, or purple embroidered with gold.

crown: not the Heb. word in i. 11 (see on), ii. 17, vi. 8.

the city . . . shouted, &c.: contrast with what is said in iii. 15 (see on) 'the city was perplexed.' Would the whole city be so much moved by what affected the Jews? Have we not here and in iii. 15 an exaggeration for the sake of magnifying Jewish influence in Persia?

16. light: a symbol of prosperity (see Job xxii. 22, xxx. 24; Ps. xxvii. 1, xxxvi. 9, &c.).

gladness: contrast with the sadness of iv. 3.

17. province: see on i. 1.

a good day: i. e. a festal day, as in ix. 19, 22. In post-biblical Hebrew the word is constantly used in this sense. One of the treatises of the Tosephta is called by this name (*Yōm Ṭob*).

many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them.

9 Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have rule over them; whereas it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated 2 them; the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them was fallen

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many . . . became Jews: no other rendering of the words is possible, though others have been proposed. Once more the tables are turned (see ver. 13). Less than three months back it was dangerous to be known as a Jew (see ii. 10, &c.). Now it is dangerous to be thought anything else—and that in Persia, not Judaea!

This mention of proselytes, the earliest in the O.T., proves that the book is not older than the Greek period (cf. ix. 27).

peoples of the land: see on Ezra iii. 3.

the fear of, &c.: objective gen. (see ix. 2 f. and cf. Gen. xxxv. 5; Exod. xv. 16; Deut. xi. 25, &c.).

IX.

1–10. *The Jews resist and slaughter their foes.* It is quite evident that the Jews did much more than defend themselves (see on ver. 13 and on viii. 13 f.). They put to death (1) 500 in the fortified quarters (ver. 6), (2) 300 in the civilian quarter (ver. 15), and (3) 75,000 in the provinces (ver. 16).

1. in the twelfth month: i. e. about nine months after the issuing of the second decree (viii. 9). The narrative is silent as to the doings of this interval.

to have rule: better, 'to have the mastery,' lit. 'to have power.'

over them, &c.: punctuate and render (as Siegfried, &c.), 'over them it was turned about (=the tables were turned, see on viii. 13 f.), so that the Jews got the mastery over their enemies.'

2. See viii. 11.

to lay hand on: see on ii. 21.

upon all the peoples. And all the princes of the provinces, 3
and the satraps, and the governors, and they that did the
king's business, helped the Jews; because the fear of
Mordecai was fallen upon them. For Mordecai was 4
great in the king's house, and his fame went forth through-
out all the provinces: for the man Mordecai waxed
greater and greater. And the Jews smote all their 5
enemies with the stroke of the sword, and with slaughter
and destruction, and did what they would unto them
that hated them. And in Shushan the palace the Jews 6
slew and destroyed five hundred men. And Parshan- 7
datha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, and Poratha, and 8
Adalia, and Aridatha, and Parmashta, and Arisai, 9

3. princes . . . satraps . . . governors: see on iii. 12.
they that did the king's business: see on iii. 9.
helped the Jews: by so doing the official class would be helping themselves. See what follows in this and the next two verses.

4. his fame: this word = 'what is said' (from the point of view of the speaker). The Heb. word = 'what is heard' (from the point of view of the hearer).

5. the Jews smote all, &c.: Paton, guided by an excessive literalism, renders 'so among their enemies the Jews made a smiting,' &c. The preposition rendered 'among' (*b*) often introduces a direct object, and it does so with this very verb in 1 Sam. xiv. 31, xxiii. 2, &c. The E.VV. are therefore correct.
and with slaughter and destruction: in Hebrew this is simply an adverbial or circumstantial clause adding force to the principal verb. The idiom is very common in Hebrew, but seems odd when put literally into English.

6. Shushan the palace: see on i. 2 and on Neh. i. 2. Note the sharp differentiation between the military (ver. 6) and the civilian quarters (ver. 14 f.) of Shushan.

7-9. The name of Haman's ten sons appear in various forms in the versions, those in the LXX differing much from the orthography of the Hebrew. The names are generally held to be of Persian origin, and gallant attempts have been made to prove this. The M.T. has many peculiarities in the forms and positions of the letters and in the arrangement of the names, and the Massorites and others have busied themselves much in explaining these things (see Ber.-Rys., Wild., Paton, &c.).

10 and Aridai, and Vaizatha, the ten sons of Haman the
son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy, slew they; but
11 on the spoil they laid not their hand. On that day the
number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace
12 was brought before the king. And the king said unto
Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed
five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten
sons of Haman; what then have they done in the rest
of the king's provinces! Now what is thy petition? and
it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further?
13 and it shall be done. Then said Esther, If it please the
king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan
to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree,
and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.
14 And the king commanded it so to be done: and a decree
was given out in Shushan; and they hanged Haman's

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10. but on the spoil they laid not their hand, though the terms of the edict allowed them to (viii. 11). Why did they thus restrain themselves? There are many guesses, one that the Jews wished to remove all suspicion that they were actuated by mercenary considerations: cf. Gen. xiv. 22.

11–15. *Esther by her earnest petition secures from the king an additional day in which the Jews may take vengeance on their foes—this time in the civilian quarters.*

12. The Jews have slain 500 men, including Haman's ten sons. Is the queen satisfied? She is not (see next verse).

13. Esther's petition: viz. that the Jews may have another day granted them to massacre their enemies in the civil as they had in the military quarters (ver. 6), and that Haman's sons, already killed (verses 7–9), should be impaled. The petition does not say much for the queen's humanity, or even for the humanity of the writer who created her character.

14. The king assents and issues a decree embodying both the requests of the queen.

they hanged: render, 'impaled.' In the present case, at all events, even if not usually, persons impaled had been previously put to death (see on Ezra vi. 11).

ten sons. And the Jews that were in Shushan gathered 15
themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the
month Adar, and slew three hundred men in Shushan;
but on the spoil they laid not their hand. And the other 16
Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves
together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their
enemies, and slew of them that hated them seventy and
five thousand; but on the spoil they laid not their hand.
This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar; 17
and on the fourteenth day of the same they rested, and
made it a day of feasting and gladness. But the Jews 18
that were in Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth
day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the
fifteenth *day* of the same they rested, and made it a day
of feasting and gladness. Therefore do the Jews of 19

15. the fourteenth day: see on verses 16–19.

three hundred men: cf. ver. 6. One would have expected a larger number in the civilian quarter, where the population was greater.

on the spoil, &c.: see on ver. 10.

16–19. *The institution of Purim; origin of the two different days of its observance.* The provincial Jews brought their acts of defence and vengeance to an end in one day, the thirteenth, resting on the following day. The Susa Jews filled two days with such acts, the thirteenth and fourteenth, resting on the fifteenth day. This difference is made to explain the divergent usage as regards the day when Purim was observed, in Susa the fifteenth day, in the provinces the fourteenth. This is, however, a case of making history to explain custom: cf. what are called 'Aetiological myths,' the ritual coming first, the myth explaining (?) it coming after [1].

Verses 16 f. should be read closely together, thus:—

'16 Now the other Jews . . . seventy and five thousand (though on the spoil they laid not their hand) 17 on the thirteenth day,' &c.

18. assembled, &c., for self-defence and slaughter (see verses 6, 15).

a day of, &c.: see ver. 17 and viii. 17.

19. Render, 'Therefore the Jews of unwalled cities (towns and

[1] See W. R. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*(2) 17 f.

the villages, that dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar *a day of* gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the
21 king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far, to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar,
22 and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, as the days

---

villages) are accustomed to keep the fourteenth of the month Adar as a source of joy, as a banquet, as a feast day, and as (a time for) sending portions to one another.'

villages: the Heb. word = 'cities,' 'towns,' or 'villages without walls of defence' (see Ezek. xxxviii. 11; Zech. ii. 8). In Deut. iii. 5 they are contrasted with 'walled cities.'

that dwell in the unwalled towns: this clause adds nothing, and was, no doubt, originally a marginal gloss to the one Heb. word translated in the E.VV. 'of the villages.'

sending portions: see on Neh. viii. 10.

Some codd. of the LXX add what is essential to the sense and probably stood originally in the M.T.: 'But dwellers in the cities keep also the fifteenth of Adar as a joyful and festal day, sending portions to their neighbours.'

20-32. *Two dispatches concerning the observance of Purim, one sent forth in the name of Mordecai* (20–22), *the other in the names of Mordecai and Esther* (29–32). Since the time of J. D. Michaelis (d. 1791) many scholars have been inclined to regard the whole of verses 20-32 as an independent piece added by the writer of the rest of the book to complete the history. The evidence is not very decisive either way, though on the whole language and matter favour this conclusion (see p. 299).

20-22. *Mordecai's decree.*

20. these things: i.e. what the letters (dispatches) enjoin, not the present book.

letters: see on i. 22.

21. keep: Heb. 'continue to keep' (part.).

fourteenth . . . fifteenth day: i.e. both days are to be kept by all Jews. According to verses 17–19 the country Jews kept the fourteenth, those of Susa the fifteenth. We have here probably the *post eventum* justification of the later (and modern) practice of observing both days (see on ix. 16–19); cf.

wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.
And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and 23
as Mordecai had written unto them; because Haman the 24
son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; but when *the matter* came before the king, 25

---

the Jewish custom of keeping two New Year's days, and even in early times two Sabbaths, to be sure that all the nation kept the festival on the same day.

22. The words **as the days . . . into a good day** are parenthetic.

the month: render, 'as the month.'

good (i.e. festival) **day.**

23–28. *Mordecai's command obeyed.*

23. undertook: the Hebrew verb (cognate with *qabbalah*) means to accept and recognize as traditional, and therefore obligatory. It is a great word in post-biblical Judaism, but in this sense occurs in the O.T. only here and in ver. 27.

The Jews look upon them (1) to keep on doing as they had begun (verses 17–19); (2) to carry out Mordecai's behest (verses 21 f.): but how could they do contradictory things? See on ver. 21.

24 f. *An account of Haman's plot,* differing from that in iii. 7–15 (see below).

24. Haman . . . the Agagite: see on iii. 1.

the enemy, &c.: see on iii. 10.

devised: see viii. 3.

Pur: see on iii. 7.

(to) **consume them**: Heb. *hummam*, with a word-play on 'Haman.' The verb (='to confound') does not occur in i–ix. 19, and has been unnecessarily rejected by some editors. It occurs in Jer. li. 34 (E.VV. 'crushed').

25. *the matter*: as this expression is implied in the feminine (=neuter) forms of the verb the italics should be dispensed with. Some (Syr., the Targs., Ryssel, &c. make the feminine suffix refer to Esther, 'When she came,' &c. But she has not been

he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged
26 on the gallows. Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto
27 them, the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year;

---

mentioned since ver. 13. It will be noted that in the present account, as above explained, Esther's part (see v–vii) is entirely ignored, which is suggestive of a different source.

he commanded by letters: the Heb. here is strange and unparalleled. Besides, we know elsewhere of no written decision of the king pronouncing sentence upon Haman. Probably the words are a copyist's marginal gloss.

he and his sons should be hanged (see on ii. 23) **on the gallows** (= 'stake'): apparently at one time, but according to vii. 10, ix. 14 Haman's sons were impaled after their father.

26. This explains for the first time in the book why lot is called *Pur*, i. e. to connect the tale incidents of the book and its patriotism with the already existing Persian feast Purim (see ver. 24, iii. 7).

Purim: the Persian (?) word is pluralized as if Hebrew.

Therefore should be immediately joined with ver. 27, 'the Jews ordained,' &c. The words between form a parenthesis.

this letter: see on Ezra iv. 8, where the Aramaic form of the same word occurs. The reference is, of course, to Mordecai's dispatch (verses 21 f.).

this matter: the theme of the letter (ver. 20 'letters').

27 gives the contents of Mordecai's dispatch (21 f.), not (as Paton) the substance of ver. 19.

such as joined themselves: i. e. proselytes (see on viii. 17).

writing: the 'letters' of ver. 20.

thereof: Heb., 'their' (writing); the possessive pronoun refers in both cases to the two days.

the appointed time: see on ver. 21.

and that these days should be remembered and kept 28
throughout every generation, every family, every province,
and every city; and that these days of Purim should
not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them
[a] perish from their seed. Then Esther the queen, the 29
daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with
all [b] authority to confirm this second letter of Purim.
And he sent letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred 30
twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus,
with words of peace and truth, to confirm these days of 31

[a] Heb. *be ended.* [b] Heb. *strength.*

---

28. family, or clan, subdivision of a tribe (see p. 52).

seed: descendants.

No nation in history has shown such solidarity and persistence in upholding the ways of the fathers as the Jews.

29–32. *Mordecai's (and Esther's) second dispatch (letter) enjoining fasting and loud lamentation as a part of the Feast.* The text has evidently been tampered with, for while Esther and Mordecai are the agents elsewhere, in ver. 30 it is one only, 'he' (unless we explain impersonally). This and the fact that in ver. 32 Esther confirms by special command what is prescribed in ver. 31 make it likely that this second letter is sent to supply what was lacking in the first.

29. Esther . . . daughter of Abihail: see on ii. 15.

wrote: the verb is fem. and implies a fem. subject, though, of course, it may be a case of the verb agreeing (in Heb.) with the nearest subject. Paton omits all reference to Mordecai in this verse and makes this second dispatch one of the queen's only.

with all authority: i. e. probably (as Keil, Scholz, &c.) 'with emphasis.'

this second letter ('dispatch'): referring to what follows (ver. 31). For the word **letter** see on ver. 26.

30. Not in the LXX.

he: i. e. Mordecai, if the text is correct (see on 29–32).

letters: see on i. 22.

hundred twenty and seven provinces: see on i. 1.

***with* words**, &c.: render, 'with words of greeting and of faithfulness.' Probably these words were on the outside of each dispatch (letter) sent out. There is no need to italicize *with*, as it is contained in the accus. case implied. 'Words of' are hardly in apposition with letters (as Bertheau-Ryssel, &c.).

Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed,
32 [a] in the matter of the fastings and their cry. And the commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

10 And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land,
2 and upon the isles of the sea. And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced

[a] See ch. iv. 3.

---

31. to confirm (or 'establish') **these days,** &c.: with special reference to what is mentioned in the end of the verse. The purpose of the second dispatch was to establish fasting and loud lamentation (see iv. 1, 3) as an essential part of the feast.

in the matter of, &c.: better, 'as regards the acts of fasting and their (accompanying) lamentation.' See for the idiom 'words' or 'things of' (='instances' or 'acts of') 'Brief Studies in Psalm Criticism' by the present writer in *Orientalische Studien* (Nöldeke), ii. 648.

their (cry): refers to the acts of fasting, the loud lamentation accompanying fasting (see iv. 1, 3).

32. The queen issues a mandate confirming what Mordecai had in his two dispatches enjoined.

the book: the word in plural is translated 'letters' in ver. 20 (see on i. 22). Perhaps Esther issued a dispatch of her own, endorsing what her cousin had done.

x. 1–3. *The king and his tribute. Mordecai's greatness.* This section hangs loosely on to what precedes, and is almost certainly an addition made from a larger record (see on ver. 2) for the purpose of extolling the king and his prime minister, who bulk so largely in the book.

1. laid a tribute: the purpose is not stated.

isles of the sea = the lands washed by the Mediterranean Sea. The extent of the king's dominions shows that no other than Xerxes can be meant.

With this verse and the first half of the next the account of Xerxes abruptly ends, though in the sources used there was probably a detailed record of that king's reign and his doings.

2. might: the Heb. word is used collectively for heroic or valiant deeds, as in 1 Kings xv. 23; 1 Chron. xxix. 30, &c.

him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the 3
Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren; seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

---

book of the chronicles, &c. : the allusion is to a history of the kings of Media and Persia, probably the official records kept year by year and reign by reign, referred to in ii. 23 and vi. 1. There is no reason to doubt that every Persian subject and even others properly recommended could consult such records. The part dealing with the reign of Xerxes might be expected to give full information about such a grand vizier as this book makes him out to be. Though the book is not written for the history in it, yet its tale must at least bear the appearance of history, like the Hellenized romances of Ktesias.

3. accepted of = 'liked' (so the Hebrew).

speaking peace: render (with Sieg., &c.), 'caring for the well-being of' (see Ps. lxxxv. 8 (9); Zech. ix. 10). The word translated 'peace' never means that, nor is the idea of peace in its root, verbal or nominal: it = 'completeness', then 'perfect well-being'—nothing lacking (see on Ps. cxix. 165, *Century Bible*).

[Ap. Esther x. 4–13. Epilogue describing how the Feast of Purim was established.]

ADDITIONAL NOTES[1]

1. WAS CYRUS THE GREAT A ZOROASTRIAN?

It will be seen from the notes in this volume (see pp. 14, 40, 102) that the present writer answers the above question in the affirmative, as have nearly all writers in the past and as do most modern writers. It must be admitted, however, that the evidence is scanty and indecisive. The number of Cyrus inscriptions that have been found is but small, the most important being the Cyrus Cylinder[2] (see p. 14) and the Nabonidus-Cyrus Chronicle[3], both in the British Museum. In both Cyrus speaks of himself as a worshipper of Marduk and as recognizing other Babylonian deities, Bel, Nebo, &c., just as in Ezra i. 2 he ascribes to Yahweh the victories he had won, and as Darius I at a later time recognized Apollo. But in no extant inscription of Cyrus is there the remotest hint of his connexion with Zoroastrianism. This may be due to the fact that almost all the contemporary records of his reign have been lost—assuming that a goodly number of such at one time existed, in harmony with the customs of the time. It should be remembered, however, that there is not a syllable in the Cyrus inscriptions known to us intimating that this great king professed any other religion than that of Zarathustra: they are simply silent as to his own religion. Some have interpreted the free way in which he allows himself to be written down as a worshipper of the gods of Babylon as well as of Yahweh as a proof of indifferentism or Agnosticism in religion, and that his tolerance was dictated by policy pure and simple (see p. 40). But the trilingual inscriptions found at Behistun, Persia[4], prove that Darius Hystaspis was an almost fanatical upholder of Mazdaism (= Zoroastrianism); yet in the Gadatas inscription[5] he associates himself with the worshippers of Apollo as if he were

[1] The author regrets that he has failed to obtain access to an article by Professor A. V. Williams Jackson in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. xxi, pp. 160–84. The subject treated of is 'The Religion of the Achaemenian Kings,' and its value is vouched for by the name of the writer: Dr. L. H. Gray adds an Appendix.

[2] See text and translation in Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, iii. 121 ff.; H. C. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R. A. S.*, 1880, 71 ff.

[3] Schrader, *op. cit.*, 167 ff.; Pinches, *JSBA.*, I. vii. 139–76.

[4] See *JRAS.*, 1847, for text and translation by H. C. Rawlinson, and especially the new and greatly improved edition issued in 1907 by the British Museum. See, for a revised translation, *Records of the Past*, i. 109 ff.

[5] See p. 102.

of the same religion as themselves. The toleration displayed by the early Persian kings is to be explained rather from the lofty ethical principles of the religion they professed (see p. 15)—Zarathustraism (Zoroastrianism), as the present writer maintains. Yet as Darius is so explicit in his utterances concerning his religion it is admittedly strange that Cyrus should have kept silence regarding the matter. Perhaps, however, if we possessed Cyrus inscriptions in as great an abundance as we do inscriptions of Darius it would be found that he too was a zealous adherent of the same faith, though, of course, he might have been less outspoken than Darius on religious questions: it is not always the man who speaks most about religion that is most religious.

There is nothing in the records which have come down to us that suggests a change in the religion of Persia between 529 when Cyrus died and 521 when Darius I began to reign. If the two kings were of different religions some indication of the consequent changes in the religious attitude of the government must have survived. Among those who say that Cyrus was a Zarathustran the following may be named, leaving out the older writers who were practically all of this opinion: Ewald[1], Kuenen[2], Renan[3], McCurdy[4] (who, however, wrongly identifies the old Iranian religion with Zoroastrianism), Nöldeke[5], Guthe[5], Gunkel[5], Bertholet[5], Budde[5], Wilhelm[5] (Jena), and Staerk[5] (Jena).

Several recent scholars, however, hold that Darius I was the first Persian king to profess Zarathustraism: thus Sayce[6], Pinches[7] (who says Cyrus, as his Anzan forefathers, was a Polytheist), E. Meyer[8], and Sir Henry Howorth[5]. Dr. E. Lehmann of Copenhagen[9] comes to the conclusion that the evidence is insufficient to permit of a decision on either side of this controversy. But it is hard to think that the king of Persia in 521 supported a different religion from that of his predecessors during the foregoing eight or nine years, without there being the slightest indication of the change in any of the records which have reached us. Note, moreover, that Darius I claims that on coming to the throne he restored the religion of his ancestors which Gaumâta the Magian had suppressed[10].

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[1] *History of Israel*, v. 40. [2] *The Religion of Israel*, ii. 139 f.
[3] *History of the People of Israel*, iii. 382.
[4] *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, iii. 429 ff., cf. p. 307.
[5] Communicated orally to the writer. [6] *Herodotus*, p. 440.
[7] *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria and Babylon*, 423. [8] *Geschichte*, &c. iii. 126.
[9] *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*(2), edited by Chantepie de la Saussaye, ii. 156.
[10] Behistun inscriptions, col. i. 14: *Records of the Past*, i. p. 115; British Museum edition, p. 168.

2. WERE THE EARLY PERSIAN KINGS TOLERANT TOWARDS THE VOTARIES OF OTHER RELIGIONS THAN THEIR OWN?

This question is asked and answered with special reference to Cyrus (Ezra i–iii), Darius I (Ezra v f.), and Artaxerxes I (Ezra vii to end of Nehemiah), and the present writer answers unhesitatingly in the affirmative: see for illustration and proof what is said on pp. 14 f., 40, and 102. It has been repeatedly stated that the sympathy shown by the early Persian kings towards the Jews and their religion arose from their consciousness of the close affinity between Zarathustraism and Yahwism: but even if the affinity were as close as it is held to be (Zarathustra was not strictly a monotheist but a duotheist), how came Cyrus and Darius I to show equal favour towards the polytheisms and ethically inferior religions of Babylon and Greece? It is probable that the official decrees in which the above kings are made to speak of themselves as worshippers of the gods of Babylon and Greece as well as of Yahweh were worded by the priests of the various cults concerned; but it is highly improbable that these kings would allow foreign priests to make them say what was false, especially if there was a tendency in what was written to compromise them with the priests of their own religion and therefore with the leaders among their own people.

Lehmann[1] seems to think that Zarathustraism was intolerant, and he refers to the Avesta for support, since in it political as well as religious opponents are classed with what belongs to the kingdom of evil, and are therefore in the name of Ahuramazda to be persecuted out of existence. But the author does not specify the period to which his description applies. It is known that the Avesta as we have it, including the often ferocious Gâthas, belongs to the time of the Sassanids (A. D. 226–641), when all the great religions seem to have given themselves up very freely to the bitterest persecution.

It has been pointed out as an illustration of the intolerance of the early Persian kings that Cambyses destroyed the Egyptian temples, though he spared the Jewish temple at Yeb[2] because the religion was akin to his own. But when Cambyses invaded Egypt on the occasion referred to his purpose was to punish the priests of Memphis for some acts of disloyalty against Persia of which they had been guilty. The sacred bull Apis was killed by the Persian army, the leading spirits among the priests being

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 183 (3rd ed., p. 201).
[2] Sachau Papyri, i. 14.

either imprisoned or put to death[1]. This was probably the occasion on which Cambyses did what the Sachau Papyri ascribe to him; the dates agree well. But this destruction of the Egyptian temples was a political not a religious act, as was the destruction of the Magian temple by Darius I[2].

For a contrary view of Cambyses' conduct see G. Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies* (1), iii. 394.

3. NOTE TO EZRA VIII. 21 (SEE PAGE 128).

Clay has found an interesting parallel to this notching in the Kassite tablets (B.C. 1800-1200), on some of which are lists of names ticked off by a stylus applied to the clay.

4. NOTE TO ESTHER II. 12-15 (SEE PAGE 319).

In his newly-issued work (see p. 305 for full title) Cosquin submits to a testing examination the theories of the Esther legend represented by de Goeje, Jensen, and Paul Haupt. The first (followed by Kuenen, August Müller, and Dyroff) held that we are to seek the origin alike of the Esther romance and of the Shahriar tale of the *Thousand and One Nights* in an old Persian tale[3]. Cosquin follows A. W. O. Schlegel in tracing this old Persian tale back to a Sanskrit source. He points out, moreover, that the Esther legend differs too much to have a common origin with either the Persian or Arabian romance. As against Jensen's identification of Vashti (Mashti) with an alleged Elamite goddess Vashti, Cosquin summons the authority of the greatest living Elamite palaeographer, R. P. Scheil, for the statement that the Elamite name is *Parti*, not Vashti (Mashti), Parti being daughter of Tariša. The author, a member of the (French) Institute, more interested apparently in archaeology than in theology, is as much opposed to the composite theory of Paul Haupt as he is to the Persian theory of de Goeje or the Elamite-Babylonian theory of Jensen.

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[1] Herodotus, iii. 27 ff.

[2] See reference in note 10 on p. 361.

[3] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9), vol. xxiii, *Thousand and One Nights*.

INDEX

Aaron, chief priest, 114.
Aaronites, 17, 61.
Ab (Abib), or fifth month, 116.
Abassaros, 47.
'Abominations,' used of mixed marriages, 135, 141.
Abrahams, Israel, 304.
Accad, 39, 42.
Access to the king, 332.
Accusative, Hebrew *b* introducing, 174, 351.
Achaemenes, 39.
Acmetha = Ecbatana, 101, 103.
Adar, month of, 109, 327.
Adonai = Lord, 20.
Adonikam, 57.
Adverbial clause, 351.
Adversaries, 194.
Adversary and enemy, 343.
Aetiological myths, 353.
Agagite, 324.
Ahasuerus, or Xerxes, 85, 306.
Ahava, River, 6, 124, 128.
Ahura mazda, 15, 40, 102, 121.
Ai, 58.
Alexander, Archibald, 8.
Alexander the Great, 19.
Amalekite, *see* Haman.
Amen, 222.
Amenophis III, King of Egypt, 102.
American Journal of Semitic Languages, 14.
Amestris, Queen, 298.
Ananiah (*Beit Hannina*), 262.
Anathoth, 57.
Andreas, 120.
'Another portion,' 183, 187.
Anshan, 39.
Anthropomorphism, 235.
Antilegomena, 292.
Antiochus III, conquest of Palestine by, 34.
Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), 34.
Antiphonal singing in Jewish music, 79.
Antonia, 169.
Aparsathchites, Arphasites, 88, 97, 105.
Apis, the sacred bull, 362.
Apocryphal Additions to Esther, 294.
Apollo, priests of, 15, 121.
— worship of, 102.
Apothecaries = mixers, 183.
Arabian Nights, 319.
Arabic, 314.
Aramaic, as language of diplomatic letters, 13, 168.
— documents, 12, 16, 23, 81.
— language, 13, 109, 314.
— Papyri, 6, 13, 14, 85, 102, 132, 146.
Archaeology, Proceedings of Society of, 13, 28, 29, 71.
Archevites, 88.
Archives, kept in many capitals, 103.
Arise = set about, 145.
Armenia, 94.
Armoury, 187.
Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), decree of, 117.
— as King of Babylon, 100, 112.
Artaxerxes II (Mnemon), 26, 33, 114, 116, 165.

Artaxerxes III (Ochus), 34, 165.
Article, definite for our indefinite, 332.
Aryan, 39.
Asaph, 168.
Asaphites, 63.
Ascent of the Corner, 191.
Ashamed, Heb. verbs for, 138.
Ashes, 330.
Ashurbanipal, 83.
Assembly, of the Gods, 302.
Asses, 69.
Assyria, 82, 91, 94, 113, 169.
Assyrian, 314.
Astonied = dumbfoundered, 136, 137.
Athanasius, 292.
Atonement, Day of, 10, 71, 218, 225.
— to make: Heb. 'to cover,' 249.
Avesta, the, 362.
Azgad, 57.
Azmaveth, 58.

Baba Bathra, 3.
Babylon, 4, 5, 6, 11, 22, 24, 26, 31, 42, 43, 46, 51, 55, 61, 81, 82, 91, 92, 94, 101, 113, 160, 169, 202, 254.
— conquest of, 32.
— route taken on departure from, 50, 116, 169.
Babylonian contracts, 96, 244.
— months, 152, 160.
— tablets, 96, 103, 168.
— Talmud, 3.
— unlucky days, 235.
Baentsch, 128.
Baer, 174.
Bagohi (Bagoas), 40, 204.
Balawat, The Bronze Gates of, 108.
Bani, house of, 154.
Banishment = excommunication, 122.
Baris, 161, 169.
Bars, 180.
Barsillai, 65.
Batten, L. W., 21.
Baudissin, 3, 13, 54, 61, 64, 114, 133, 242, 246, 299.
Beam, used as instrument for punishment, 107.
Beard, plucking off of as sign of sorrow, 136.
Bedouins, 199.
Beer-sheba, 261.
Behistun Inscriptions, 111, 323, 360, 361.
Beiroth, 58.
Beit Jibrin, 261.
Beit Nettef, 57.
Bel, 40, 42.
Benjamin and Judah, 45, 147.
Benjamites, 45, 257.
Ben-Sira, 22.
Benzinger, 136, 199, 248.
Berit, 244.
Berosus, 40.
Bertheau, 21, 50, 54, 70, 99, 106, 152, 156, 157, 170, 182, 195, 205, 221, 283, 286.
Bertheau-Ryssel, 90, 155, 255, 300, 324, 351, 357.
Bertholet, 13, 28, 40, 43, 44, 50, 60, 66, 70, 73, 87, 90, 95, 98, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 119, 121, 126, 128, 130, 133, 136, 143, 167, 170, 173, 182, 189, 190, 194, 195, 227, 240, 242, 248, 249, 250, 254, 255, 265, 266, 267, 271, 276, 277, 283, 286, 322, 361.
Bethel, 58.
Beth essentiae, 195.
Beth-zur, 186.
Beyond the river = Transpotamia, 87.
Bible, Hebrew, 3, 27.
— English, 3.
— Welsh, 3.
— Old Testament, 6, 8, 25.
Bigtha, 322.

Bigthan, 322.
Bigthana, 322.
Birket-el-Hamra, 174, 185.
Birket-es-Silwan, 185.
Bissel, 29.
Bliss, Dr., 173, 177.
Blush = to be distressed, 138.
Bohlenius, 70.
Bolts, 180.
Book, 313, 358.
— of the law of Moses, 219.
Books, binding of, 157, 222.
Booths, 226.
Borrowing and lending, 198.
Boswellia, a tree, 279.
Bowing down as sign of reverence, 324.
Bows, 195.
Brereton, 294.
Briggs, C., 30.
Broad place, 148.
Broad wall, 183.
Brook, or Wady, 175.
Budde, 10 (n.), 13, 54, 220, 242, 361.
Buhl, Franz, 26, 170, 308.
Build = rebuild, 72, 167, 208, 214.
Bullinger, 336.
Burnt offerings, *see* Offerings.
Butler, 165.

Callistus, Nicephorus, 292.
Cambridge Bible, 161.
Cambyses, 15, 16, 39, 83, 109.
— conquest of Egypt, 32, 362.
Camels, 69.
Canaanites, 135, 232.
Canon, Jewish, 3.
Canticles, 291.
Capital punishment, among Assyrians, 108.
— — Hebrews, 108.
— — Persians, 107.
Captivity, children of, 55, 82.
Carchemish, 50, 116, 169.
Carthage, Council of, 292.
Cassel, D., 341.
Castle, 169.
Cell, 130, 190.
Century Bible, 31, 32, 43, 56, 79, 94, 106, 116, 122, 141, 173, 189, 192, 208, 252, 268, 323.
Chaldeans, 99.
— language of, 99.
Chamber, great, 279.
Chamberlains = eunuchs, 310, 315, 320.
Chambers, 130, 190.
Chancellor = counsellor, 87, 92.
Chantepie de la Saussaye, 361 (n.).
Chargers = libation cups, 48.
Chemosh, 121.
Chephizah, 58.
Cheyne, 15 (n.), 21, 23, 28, 30, 31, 32, 40, 48, 81.
Chief priest, 114.
Chigi, 28.
Children of, meaning of phrase, 63.
Chisianus Codex, 28.
Chislev (Kislew), or ninth month, 147, 160.
Choaspes (a river), 161.
Chronicler, 4, 14, 16, 40, 41, 54, 81, 109, 112, 177, 254, 258, 267.
Chronicles, Book of, 323, 358.
Chronology, comparative table of, 32.
Cicero, birth of, 34.
Circumstantial clause, 351.
Cities, meaning of Hebrew word for, 149.
City records, 15.
— walls, repairing of, 84.
Clans, lay, 124.
— local, 53.
— personal, 52.
Clericus, 304.
Coats of mail, 196.
Codes, Deuteronomic Code, 10, 18, 22, 23, 129, 137, 231, 277.

Codes, Ezekiel's Code, 9.
— Hammurabi Code, 9 (n.), 199.
— Holiness Code, 10.
— Priestly Code, 9, 10, 20, 22, 33, 111, 113, 129, 161, 218, 279.
Codomannus, *see* Darius III.
Commandments, 163.
Commission appointed *re* mixed marriages, 144, 157.
Commission of Artaxerxes I to Nehemiah, 168.
Commissions of Artaxerxes I to Ezra, 117, 132.
Condamin, 344.
Confession of Ezra, 137, 157.
Confession, to make = to praise, to give thanks, Hebrew word for, 137, 143, 148.
Congregation, 68, 144, 220.
Continual = daily, 74.
Cook, Stanley, 199.
Corin (measures), 120.
Corner Gate, 181.
Cornill, 9, 13, 133.
Cosmetics, 315, 319.
Cosquin, 363.
Couches, 309.
Counsellors, *see* Chancellors.
— Seven, 118.
Couriers, 329.
Cousinship of Mordecai and Esther, 316, 317.
Covenant, sure, 244.
Covering of head as sign of grief, 341.
Craftsmen, Valley of, 262.
Crown, 311.
Crowned horses, 340.
Crucifixion, 108.
Cunaxa, battle of, 33.
Cuneiform inscriptions, 40, 96, 360.
Cupbearer, 165.
Curse, 246.
Custom (tax), 90.
Cuthaean, 179.
Cyaxares, 308.
Cymbals, played by Levites, 78.
Cyprus, 169.
Cyrus, a worshipper of Bel, Marduk, and Nebo, 360.
— Aryan by descent, 39.
— called King of Babylon, 99, 113.
— called King of Persia, 19, 41.
— clay cylinder of, 14, 360.
— edict of, 40, 101, 138.
— policy of toleration of, 40, 362.
— Zoroastrian in religion, 360.

Damascus, 169.
Damasias, 167.
Daniel, 123.
Daric, derivation of the word, 70, 130.
Daric and Darius, 70.
Dariku, 70.
Darius I (Hystaspis), a fanatical Zoroastrian, 360.
— called King of Assyria, 100, 112.
— inserted for name Cyrus, 50.
— tolerance of, 13, 102, 360, 362.
Darius II (Nothus), 33.
Darius III (Codomannus), 20, 34.
Dates, comparative, 32.
Dathé, 286.
Daughters = dependent townships, 184.
David, 92, 109.
— as originator of Temple music, &c., 64, 79.
— city of, 185.
— sepulchre of, 186.
Davies, T. Witton, 208, 235, 268, 292, 323, 333, 358.
Day, length of, 197.
Days, unlucky, 235.
Debts, 248.
Decree of Cyrus, 40, 101, 138.

Decree of Darius referring to rebuilding of Temple, 101.
Dedication, Feast of, 109.
— of Temple, 109.
— of wall of Jerusalem, 268.
Dehaites, 88.
Deissmann, 28, 306.
Delitzsch, Franz, 8, 26.
— Friedrich, 47, 87, 90, 104, 249.
Deliver, to, 333.
Deuteronomic legislation, 61, 115, 135. *See under* Codes.
Devoted, of cities, property, &c., 147.
Dibon (*Dimonah*), 261.
Dillmann, 128, 226, 248, 251.
Dinaites, 88.
District, Hebrew word for, 183, 187.
Divorce, of foreign wives, 25, 112.
Documents used in Ezra, *see* Sources.
Door = leaf of parchment book, 157.
— = threshold, 322.
— of city gate, 180, 206.
— of Temple, 209.
Dough, 251.
Doughty, C. M., 199.
Dragon's Well, 173.
Drink offering, 74, 106, 137.
Driver, 13, 31, 61, 67, 94, 133, 248, 252, 300.
Dualism, 15.
Duff, A., 164.
Duhm, 31, 81.
Duncker, 169 (n.).
Dung Gate, 173, 270.
Dyroff, 363.

East, Hebrew terms for, 271.
— Gate, 190.
Ecbatana, 101.
Ecclesiastes, 292.
Edfu, Egyptian temple at, 102.
Edomites in S. Palestine (?), 53, 73.
Egirtu, 87.
Egypt, 15, 169.
— conquest of, 32.
— revolt of, 32.
Elam, Elamite, 39.
Elders, 147.
Elephantinê, temple at, 32.
— appeal of Jews at, 33.
Eliashib, 17, 19, 178, 279.
Elul, or sixth month, 210, 266.
el Wad, 173.
Encyclopaedia Biblica, 171.
Enemy = robbers in general, 128, 131, 196. *See* Adversary.
Ephraim Gate, 177, 227, 273.
Episcopos, 315.
Erbt, 304.
Êrû, 9.
Esar-haddon, 83.
Esdras I, 27, 127, *et passim*.
Esther, Queen, 293, 299.
— age of, 297.
— conceals her nationality, 318.
— cousin of Mordecai, 316, 317.
— cruelty of, 293, 352.
— Judaism of, 318.
— origin of name, 302.
— petition of, 335, 342, 352.
Esther, Book of, abstract of contents of, 295.
— — aim and character of, 296.
— — date and authorship of, 299.
— — name of, 291.
— — place in Canon of, 291.
— — unity and integrity of, 298.
Ethiopia, 207.
Eunuchs, Rev. V.: 'chamberlains', 310.
Euphrates, 87, 169.
Euting, 173.
Evening oblation, 137.
Ewald, 19, 20, 29, 48, 50, 73, 168, 211, 242, 265, 267, 293, 361.

Excommunication, 122.
Exiles returned under Zerubbabel, 23, 44.
— — list of, 50.
— — Ezra, 122.
— extent of area occupied by, 147, 254, 256, 260.
Expositor, 235 *n.*
Expressed = ticked off, 128.
Ezra, arrival at Jerusalem of, 113, 133, 157.
— commission to, 117.
— confession of, 137, 157.
— conspectus of chief events in the life of, 157.
— death of, 158.
— doxology of, 122.
— genealogy of, 114.
Ezra = help, 114.

Farwardigân, 303.
Fasting, as sign of mourning, 128, 146, 331.
— before a journey, 128.
— includes prayer, 334.
Fathers' houses, heads of, 45.
Feast (banquet), lit. 'drinking meal,' 307.
— of Dedication of Temple, 109.
— — New Moons, 75.
— — Passover, 5, 10, 111.
— — Passover and Unleavened Bread, 111.
— — Pentecost, 10.
— — Tabernacles, 5, 7, 10, 16, 71, 73, 75, 133, 156, 158, 218, 225.
— — Weeks, 10, 75.
Feasts, observance of resumed after the return, 111.
— original character of, 73.
Fire offering, 104.
Firstborn sons, traces of practice of sacrificing, 251.
Firstborn of animals, 251.
Firstfruits, 250.
Fish Gate, 180.
Flesh = human being, 200.
For = on behalf of, 149.
Forest of the king, 168.
Fountain Gate, 174, 270.
Fox, 192.
Frankincense, 279.
Frazer, John, 302, 304.
Freewill offerings, 75.
Fritsche, 29.

Gadatas, 15, 102.
Gadatas inscription, 14, 102, 117, 121, 360.
Gall, 173.
Gallows, 338.
Gap between Ezra and Nehemiah, 159.
Garments, rending of, as sign of grief, 136.
Gashmu, 176.
Gates: Corner Gate, 181.
— Dung Gate, 173, 270.
— East Gate, 190.
— Ephraim Gate, 177, 227, 273.
— Fish Gate, 180.
— Fountain Gate, 174, 270.
— Golden Gate, 190.
— Hammiphkad, Gate of, 191.
— Horse Gate, 189.
— King's Gate, 322, 341.
— Old Gate, 181.
— Sheep Gate, 179, 189.
— Valley Gate, 172, 184, 270.
Gates, doors in, 206.
— keepers of, 63.
— structure of, 206, 284.
Geba, 58.
Geissler, 10, 23, 277.
Genealogies, *see* Lists.
Genitive, objective, 224, 350.
Ger, 229.
Gerizim, temple on, 179, 287.
Gershom, 123.
Gerund, 44.
Gesenius, 67, 70, 250, 286.
Ghetto, 44.
Gibbar, 57.

Gibeonites, 63.
Gifts = freewill offerings, 75, 321.
Gihon (Virgin's Spring), 185, 189.
Gilgameš legend, 303.
Ginsburg, 28, 29, 174.
Gittaim, 262.
God, favour of displayed, 140.
— of Heaven, 41, 107.
— — Jerusalem, 119.
— — our Fathers, 122.
Goeje, de, 363.
Gôla, 24.
Golden Gate, 190.
Goldsmiths, 182, 191.
Good day = festal day, 349.
Goods = wealth, possessions, 106.
Gordon, A. R., 235.
Gracchus, Caius, Roman Tribune, 34.
Grace = favour, 138.
Graetz, 14, 54, 84, 101, 304.
Graf, 61.
Gray, G. B., 110, 224, 251
Great Synagogue, 8, 220.
Greek, 306, 314.
— Hellenistic, 306.
Green, W. H., 8.
Grief, signs of, 136.
Grote, 327.
Grotius, 198.
Guard Court, 188.
Guilt offering, 153.
Gunkel, 361.
Guthe, 40, 43, 44, 48, 58, 104, 130, 173, 174, 177, 190, 193, 195, 198, 240, 265, 266, 271, 273, 280, 287, 361.
Guthe-Batten, 36, 282.
Gwyn, Dr., 29.

Hacaliah, read Khakkeleyah, 160.
Hadassah, or Esther, 303, 317.
Haggai, 5, 23, 94.
Hagiographa, 3.
— longest verse in the, 347.
Hair, plucking out of, as sign of sorrow, 136.
Haircloth, *see* Sackcloth.
Hakkepharim, 206, 207.
Halévy, 25.
Hallelujah, meaning of, 79.
Haman, an Amalekite, 298, 324.
— cruelty of, 293.
— derivation of name, 303.
— impaled with his sons (?), 299.
— made Grand Vizier, 323.
— property of, confiscated, 345.
Haman's sons, names of, variously given, 351.
Hammeah, Tower of, 179.
Hammedatha, 324.
Hammer, Von, 303.
Hammiphkad, Gate of, 191.
Hammurabi Code, 9 (n.), 199.
Hananel, Tower of, 180.
Hanan, 282.
Hanani, 212.
Hananiah, 212.
Hand of our God, 128, 131.
Hang (*see* Impale), 107, 323.
Hannibal, treaty of Philip with, 34.
Haplography, 308.
Harim, 59, 60, 263.
Harsith Gate, 173.
Harvey, Lord A. J., 54.
Harvey-Jellie, 173.
Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, 252.
— *Small Dictionary of the Bible*, 201.
Haupt, 9 (n.), 97, 104, 214, 236, 302, 304, 322, 323.
Havernick, 296.
Hazor, 262.
Head covered, a sign of grief, 341.
Heart, 208.
— sorrow of, 166.
Heathen, 201.

Heave offering, 252, 275.
Heaven, God of, 41, 107.
— of Heavens, 2, 31.
Heavens, four quarters of, 271.
Hebrew Bible, 3.
— language, 314.
— Old Testament, 8.
— Rabbinical, 8.
— of Palestine in Ezra's time, 223, 285.
Hebron, 261.
Hegai, 315.
Hengstenberg, 8, 67.
Herodotus, 307, 332.
— and Aeschylus, 32.
Herzfeld, 29, 279.
Hexapla, Origen's, 3, 28.
Hexateuch, 8, 10, 11.
— publications of, 33.
Hezekiah, 39.
High priesthood, 53, 59, 114. *See* Priests, chief.
Hinnom, Valley of, 172, 173.
Hiphil, Inner, 220.
Hiram, King of Tyre, 19.
Historicity of Book of Esther improbable, 297.
Hittites, 233.
Hitzig, 314.
Hodaviah, 63.
Holzinger, 128.
Hommel, 304.
Hoonacker, v., 13, 21, 25, 26, 47, 84, 116, 126, 151.
Horeb, 293.
Horonite, 170, 178.
Horse Gate, 189.
Horses, 69.
— crowned, 340.
House = subdivision of Jewish clan, 44, 65.
— = treasure house of his God, 46.
— of the mighty men, 186.
— — — women, 315.
Howorth, Sir Henry H., 13, 21, 28, 29, 71, 361.
Humban, 303.
Humiliation, 137.
Humman, 303.
Hupfeld, 251.
Hystaspis, *see* Darius I.
Hyde, Thomas, 303.
Hyrcanus, John, reign of, 34.

Ibn Ezra, 49.
Iddo, 126.
'Iggereth, 87.
Imbert, 25, 47.
Immer, 60.
Impale, Impalement, 107, 323.
Impersonal verb, *see* Indefinite subject.
Inaros, revolt of, 32.
Indefinite subject, 78, 103, 152, 213, 229, 267, 312, 326, 357.
India, 307.
Infinitive absolute, 209.
Inscriptions, Persian, 39, 314, 360.
— trilingual, 314.
Interest, 199.
Interpreter, 292.
Isles of the sea, 358.
Israel, 24, 26, 31, 71, 109, 112.
— rebellion and punishment of, 138.
— meaning whole community, 24, 26, 31, 144.
— — laity, 109, 145, 153, 256.
Ishtar, 302, 303.
— legend, 303.

Jaddua (Yaddua), 19, 20, 34, 146, 178, 264.
Jaffa Gate, 173.
Jahn, G., 103.
Jamnia, Synod of, 3, 13, 292.
Jampel, 82, 101, 102, 103, 304.
Jannaeus, Alexander, 34.
Jebus, Jebusites, 233.
Jehohanan, son of Eliashib, 146.
— chamber of, 146.
Jehring, 336.

Jensen, P., 302, 303, 324, 363.
Jericho, 59, 180.
Jerome, 3, 323.
Jerome's Version, 294.
Jerusalem, arrival of Nehemiah at, 169.
— second arrival of Nehemiah at, 278, 280.
— capture of, 34.
— destruction of, by Nebuchadnezzar, 84, 91.
— efforts to increase population of, 214.
— mighty kings of, 92.
— population of small, 214.
— state of, on arrival of Ezra, 113.
— the Holy City, 254.
— walls of, *see* Walls.
Jerusalem and Judah (Judah and Jerusalem), 55, 95, 118, 140.
Jeshua (Joshua), 4, 22, 51, 56, 63, 72, 75, 77, 95.
Jesus and Joshua, 333.
Jews, as bondmen, 139.
— confiscation of property of, 147.
— language of, 285.
— modern, 329.
— music of, 78, 79.
— new religious community of, in Jerusalem, 89.
— neighbours of, 148.
— officials of, 14.
— remnant of, 142.
— return of, 32, 159.
— second return of, 33.
— separateness of, 327.
Jewish Encyclopaedia, 304.
Joel, prophecy of, 33.
Johns, C. H. W., 199, 235.
Johnstone, 235.
Jonathan, made high-priest, 34.
Jonathan, should be John, 264.
Josephus, 3, 19, 28, 40, 67, 104, 109, 133, 146, 156, 157, 168, 170, 179, 211, 248, 286, 300, 307, 323.
Josephus and Esdras, 28.
Judah, post-exilic inhabitants of, 254. *See* Map, p. 38.
Judah, province of, 147, 256, 257, 260.
— read Hodaviah, 78.
Judah and Benjamin, 45, 147.
Judaism, 15, 293.
— reorganization of, 6.
Judge (verb), 121.
Judgements, 163.
Judges, or *Shophetim*, 150.
Julius Caesar, birth of, 34.
Justi, Ferdinand, 101.

Kadmiel, 63.
Kalisch, 67.
Kamphausen, 299.
Kassite tablets, 363.
Kaulen, 295.
Kautzsch, 90, 197, 267, 295.
Keil, 8, 20, 29, 49, 54, 76, 106, 156, 157, 173, 254, 255, 296.
Keilah, 186.
Keltic, 332.
Kent, 5, 14, 21, 84, 101, 104, 105, 111, 133, 177, 195, 273, 325.
Kenushata, 271.
Ketubim, 3, 291.
Khanukah, 110, 268.
Kidron, 175.
Kikkar, 269.
King, business of, 328.
— forest of, 168.
— gardens of, 174.
— house of, 105.
— gate of, 322, 341.
— how to be approached, 332.
— pool of, 174.
— treasure house of, 105.
King of Persia, of Cyrus, 19, 41.
Kiriath-arba, 261.
Kiriath-arim, 58.
Kirisha, 337.
Kirkpatrick, 18.

Kislew (Chislev), or ninth month, 147, 160, 268.
Kittel, 73.
Klostermann, 10, 18, 21, 48, 84, 95, 133, 220, 226, 300.
König, 133, 299.
Korahites, 62.
Kōsher (Kāsher), 346.
Kosters, 21, 23, 25, 26, 40, 47, 48, 54, 84, 91, 101, 116, 133, 136, 140, 162, 226, 229, 242, 247, 275, 277.
Koyunjik, or Nineveh, 100, 103.
Ktesias, 91, 103, 165, 167, 359.
Kuenen, 10, 18, 21, 48, 84, 89, 95, 133, 220, 226, 300, 361.
Kuthaean, 179. *See* Cuthaean.

Lagarde, 302, 303, 304.
Lamentations, 292.
Land, of captivity, 192.
— unclean, 140.
Lands = heathen lands, 138.
Langen, 295.
Lap, 203.
Law, as to drinking, 310.
— reading of the, 156, 158.
— of Moses, &c., in Ezra and Nehemiah, 9, 72, 115.
— — — Book of the, 219.
Laymen, 71.
Lee, 286.
Lehmann, 361, 362.
Lending and borrowing, 198.
Letters = dispatches, 86, 87, 207, 313, 358.
— of complaint sent to Persian Court, 84.
Levi, 60.
Levita, Elias, 220.
Levites, absence of, among returned exiles, 126.
— as musicians, &c., 62, 78, 258.
— courses of, 110.
— fewness of, among returned exiles, 61, 126.
Levites, functions of, 61, 126.
— generic and specific use of term, 61, 78, 158.
— organization of, 159.
— return of from exile, 60.
— years of service of, 77.
Light = prosperity, 349.
List of names in Ezra and Nehemiah discussed, 52.
Lists, genealogical, 54, 214, 254.
Little ones, Hebrew word sometimes includes wives, 128.
Lod, or Lydda, 59.
Lod and Ono, 59.
Löhr, 69, 182, 273.
Longimanus, *see* Artaxerxes I.
Lord (Yahweh), 162.
Lot, division by, 326.
Lots, *see* Purim.
Lucky and unlucky days, 235.
Luther, 293.
Lydians, 39.

Maccabaean uprising, 26, 34, 297.
Maccabaeus, Judas, victory over Nicanor, 302.
Macedonian war, first, 34.
Madden, 70.
Magistrates and judges, 121.
Magnesia, 14, 102.
Malachi, 8, 31.
Malachi and Isaiah, composition of, 33.
Man, Hebrew *Adam* = human being, 171.
Manna, 236.
Manasseh, Prayer of, 291.
Manasses, son of Jaddua, 179.
Mantle, rending of as sign of grief, 136.
Marathon, battle of, 32.
Marble, 309.
Marduk (Merodak), 14, 40, 42, 46, 98, 302.

Marquart, 36, 81, 101, 102, 103, 120, 162, 277, 289.
Marry, Hebrew word means 'to give a home to,' 144.
Marti, Karl, 19, 32, 81, 104.
Masons and, in Hebrew, stone-cutters, 76.
Massacre of non-Jews by Jews, 350, 352.
Massorah, 3.
Massorites, 72.
Mazdaism, 360.
Mazdaist, 42, 121.
McCurdy, 361.
Meal (cereal) offering, 9, 174, 106, 137, 247, 279.
Measure of wheat, 120.
Meat (flesh offering), 137.
Mecca, 138.
Meconah (*Mekenna*), 261.
Medes, 39.
Media, 94.
Medo-Persian kingdom, 308.
Megabysus, revolt of, 33.
Megillah, 291.
Megilloth, 291.
Mehanem, King of Israel, 92.
Meinhold, 235, 270.
Meissner, 87, 96, 303.
Melito, Bishop of Sardis, 292.
Memoirs of Nehemiah, 7.
Memorial, 177.
Menti, 87.
Merchants, 190, 191.
Mercy, 122, 165.
Meremoth, 181.
Merrill, Selah, 172.
Meshullam, 181, 190, 221.
Mesopotamia, 87.
Messiah, expectation of, 94.
Meyer, E., 13, 23, 47, 48, 51, 66, 68, 70, 80, 81, 87, 91, 94, 97, 102 (n.), 111, 116, 121, 132, 136, 169, 169 (n.), 182, 185, 246, 254, 255, 272, 275, 278, 361.
Michaelis, J. D., 68, 156, 227, 299, 302, 304, 354.
Michaelis, J. H., 67
Michmas, 58.
Ministers, 127.
Minkhah, 9, 18, 74, 106, 137, 247, 279.
Mishnah, 4, 220.
Mitchell, 173.
Mithredath, subordinate official, 86.
— treasurer to Cyrus, 47, 85.
Mixed marriages, 6, 18, 25, 26, 31.
— commission in connexion with, 144, 157.
— Ezra's grief at, 157.
— means used by Ezra to end, 133, 134.
— protest of Nehemiah against, 159, 285.
— repentance of people on account of, 143.
Mizpah, district of, 185.
— town of, 182, 186.
Mnemon, *see* Artaxerxes II.
Modern discovery, 340.
Molek, 173.
Mommert, 168, 169, 172.
Months, Jewish and Babylonian, 152, 160.
Mōr, 319.
Mordecai, age of, according to Book of Esther, 297, 316.
— a Jew, 341.
— cruelty of, 293.
— etymology of name, 302, 316.
— Judaism of, 318.
— refusal to bend before Haman, 324.
— relationship to Esther (317) concealed, 298, 318.
— sitting at the king's gate, 322, 341.
— succeeds Haman, 345.
Mordecai and Esther, edict of, 357.
Morgan, de, 39.
Mortgage of lands, 200.

Moses, five books of, 11.
— Law of, 115, 219, 226.
'Most holy things,' 67.
Moulton, J. H., 28, 306.
Mourning, acts of, 331.
— signs of, 136.
Mühlau, 186.
Mules, 69.
Myrrh, 319.

Nabonidus, 39, 42.
Nabonidus - Cyrus Chronicle, 360.
Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, 99.
Nabunaid, 14.
Nahamani, 55.
Nail, 139.
Name, significance of, 164.
Nations = heathen, 207.
Nazianzen, Gregory, 292.
Neanias, 144.
Nebo, the God, 40, 42.
— a town, 58.
Nebuchadnezzar, 5, 46, 84, 91, 92.
— spelling of name, 55, 99, 317.
Nehemiah, a Jerusalemite, 166.
— arrival in Jerusalem, 169.
— second arrival in Jerusalem, 278, 280.
— confession and prayer, 162.
— inspection of walls of Jerusalem, 172.
— meaning of name, 160.
— memoirs of, 7.
— protest against mixed marriages, 159, 285.
— route taken by to Jerusalem, 169.
Nekoda, 65.
Nestle, 28, 29.
Nethinim, in Temple, 62, 63, 64, 71, 121, 127, 190.
Netophah, 57, 269.
New Moons, Feast of, 75.
— Year, 152.
Nikaso, daughter of Sanballat, 179.
Nikel, J., 97.
Nisan, month of, 116, 131, 152, 165.
Nît, 15.
Noadiah, the prophetess, 210.
— son of Binnui, 131.
Nob, 262.
Nobles = first men, 308.
— = freedmen, 175.
— = powerful ones, 181, 247.
Nöldeke, 14, 20, 91, 146, 302, 328, 358, 361.
Nominal apposition, 135.
North, Hebrew terms for, 271.
Now, two Hebrew words so rendered, 163.
Nowack, 19.
Number of those who returned, 52.
— of vessels restored by Cyrus, 49.
Numbers, significant, 51, 118, 310.

Oath, 203.
Objective genitive, 224, 350.
Occasions when vessels were removed from Temple, 46.
Ochus, *see* Artaxerxes III.
Oettli, 36, 106, 140, 276, 299, 305, 343.
Offerings, burnt, 72, 73, 74, 106, 132, 137.
— drink, 74, 106, 137.
— fire, 104.
— freewill, 75.
— guilt, 153.
— heave, 252, 275.
— meal, or minkhah, 9, 18, 74, 106, 137, 247, 279.
— meat (flesh), 137.
— sin, 110, 132, 249.
— wood, 250.
Officer, 315.
Old Gate, 181.

Olive branches, 226.
Onias, appointment of as high priest, 34.
Ono, 59, 206.
Ophel, 189.
Open places, 195.
Oppert, J., 337.
Organization of Persian kingdom, *see* Persian kingdom.
Orientalische Studien, 333, 358.
Origen, 3.
Origen's Hexapla, 28.
Orr, 304 (n.).
Osnappar, 88.
Outward Court, 339.
Overseer, 259, 315.

Padah = redeemed, 164.
Pahath-Moab, 56.
Palace, or fortress, 161, 307.
Palace, inner court of, 335.
— outer court of, 339.
Palestine, 14, 96.
— as bridge between Egypt and Babylon, 102.
— condition of on arrival of Ezra, 113.
— conquered by Antiochus III, 34.
Papyri, Aramaic, 6, 13, 14, 32 (n.), 33 (n.), 40 (n.), 42, 85, 88, 96, 102, 103, 107, 132 146, 161, 170, 177, 204, 209.
Paradise, 168.
Parchment roll, leaves of mixed, 157.
Parti, 363.
Partia, 94.
Participle passive, used adverbially, 92.
Pasagarda, 101.
Pashhur, 60.
Passover, 5.
Paton, L. B., 172, 292, 299, 300, 304, 322. 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 330, 351.
Paulus of Tella, 28.
Pavement, 309.
Payment of workmen in money, 75.
Peace, incorrect translation of Hebrew term of greeting, 97, 359.
Pedaiah, 282.
Pekhah (Ass.) *Pakhat*, 132, 169.
Peloponnesian War, 33.
Pentateuch, 8.
Pentecost, 10.
People = laity, 125.
Peoples of the lands = heathen in general, 73, 83, 136.
Perfumes, 315, 319.
Persepolis, 101.
Persia, conqueror of, 34.
— kings of, 140.
— officials of, 5, 26.
— monuments of, 39, 360.
— supremacy of, 19.
Persian exchequer, money in, 120.
— kingdom, organization of, 87, 132, 307, 328.
— — end of, 34.
Persians, heavy drinkers, 310.
Peters, 245 (n.).
Petrie, F., 196.
Petition of Esther, 335, 342 352.
Phoenicia, 169.
Pinches, 235, 360 (n.), 361.
Pisistratus, 32.
Place = Jewish quarter, 43.
Plain, meaning of Hebrew word so translated, 187, 269.
Plainly (distinctly), 92.
Plataea and Mycale, battle of, 32.
Plural of intensity, 148, 195.
Plutarch, 340.
Pohlmann, 28.
Poll tax, 9, 248.
Polyglot, of Walton, 28.
Poor, suffering and complaint of in Jerusalem in time of Nehemiah, 198.

Population of Jerusalem small, 214.
Porters, in Temple, 62, 63, 71, 153, 212.
Portions, or diet, for maidens, 318.
Postal service in time of Xerxes, 313.
'Post-haste,' 329.
Posts = 'runners,' 329.
Pound, 71.
Praise, to, *see* Confession.
Prayer, spreading out of hands during, 138.
Precious things, 46.
Priest, chief (high), 53, 59, 114, 178.
— absence of at reading of the Law, 221.
Priests, city and country, 61.
— dominance of in Chronicles, 17.
— garments of, 70, 71.
— laxity of, 18, 278.
— return from exile of, 60.
— chiefs of, leading members of priestly class, 129.
Priests and Levites, 17, 18, 44, 71, 145.
Princes, 130, 134, 136, 147, 149.
Proceedings of Society of Biblical Archaeology, 13, 28, 29, 71.
Prophecy = to play the part of a prophet, 95.
Proselytes, 246, 301, 350, 356.
Province, 55, 307.
Psalteries and harps, 268.
Pseudo-Smerdis, reign of, 32, 83.
Ptolemy I (Lagos), 34.
— II (Philadelphus), 34.
Pukhrâ, 303.
Pukhrū, 302.
Pulpit, 221.
Punic Wars, 34.
Pur, meaning of word, 302, 303, 326.
Purah (winepress), 304.
Purification, by priests and Levites, 269.
Purim, Feast of, 291, 293, 296, 301.
— institution of, 353.

Qanah (redeemed), 201.
Qeṭoret, 279.
Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes), 292.
Queen, influence of, and derivation of Hebrew word so rendered, 167.
Quran, 199.

Rabbi ben Lakish, 293.
Rabshakeh, 165.
Rain, Great, 148.
Ram as guilt offering, 153.
Ramah, 58.
Rashi, 49, 174.
Rawlinson, 20, 92, 221, 250, 254, 267, 270, 297, 316, 324, 325, 327, 344, 349, 360 (n.), 363.
Reading of the Law by Ezra, 156, 158.
Reclining at meals, 309.
Records, Babylonian, 51.
— city (Jerusalem), 15, 152.
— Persian, 90, 323, 339.
— Temple, 12, 54.
— of the past, 39, 360.
Redeemed (Heb. *Qanah*), 201.
— — *Padah*, 164.
Redundancies in Nehemiah, 204, 206.
Register, 66 ; *cf.* Lists.
Rehoboam, King of Israel, 19.
Rehum, 85, 86, 93, 96, 263.
— king's answer to, 92.
Release, 321.
Relief, 333.
Religious centralization, 39.
Religious element, absent from Esther, but introduced in the Greek additions, 294.
Remnant, 138, 142.
Renan, 22, 30, 40, 47, 48, 361.

Reuss, 20, 30, 40, 47, 48.
Revenue of Persian kingdom, 327.
Review of Theology and Philosophy, 235.
Right, or fixed share, 177.
Ring, signet, 328.
Robinson, Dr. E., 172.
Roll (clay tablet), 103.
Roman Senate, 92.
Romans, war with Samnites, 34.
Roof, flat, 227.
Roominess = deliverance, 333.
Rosenzweig, 20, 126.
Route taken by Zerubbabel, &c., 50; and by Nehemiah, 169.
Royal apparel, 349.
— house, 105.
Ruler (governor), 136, 175.
Ruth, 31, 292.
Ryle, 3, 13, 21, 43, 48, 50, 99, 116, 133, 157, 165, 167, 173, 185, 252, 255, 270, 282, 283, 292.
Ryssel, 21, 50, 54, 70, 99, 133, 156, 197, 242, 267, 282, 283, 286, 299, 308, 322, 355.

Sabasare, 47.
Sabbatic year, 10.
Sabbath, observance of, 8, 31, 159, 234.
Sachau, Aramaic Papyri, 32 (n.), 33 (n.), 40 (n.), 42, 96, 102, 103, 107, 146, 161, 170, 177, 204, 209, 362 (n.), 363.
Sackcloth, 229, 330.
Sacrifice, as a meal, 106.
Sacrifices, *see* Offering.
Sacrificial regulations, 72.
— system, restored after the exile, 74.
Sais, 15.
Salamis, battle of, 321.
Salt, 120.
— to eat, significance of phrase, 90.
Samaria, army of, 191.
— province of, 170, 260.
— Sanballat Governor of, 170, 260.
— town of, 83, 89, 170.
Samaritan officials, 92.
— opposition to Nehemiah, 171, 206.
— party, 81, 94, 160.
— party, secession of, 33, 178.
— Temple, building of, 33.
Samaritans, broadmindedness of, 26, 81, 171, 178.
— letter of accusation against Jews, sent by to Artaxerxes I, 85.
— would join in building the Temple, their offer refused, 80.
Sanballat, the Horonite, 170, 178, 206, 207.
— the Kuthaean, 179.
Sanctify = to set apart, 276.
Sanabassar, 47.
Sanskrit, 333.
Sargon, 42, 82, 83, 176.
Sarim, 134.
Sassabassaros, 47.
Sassanian kings, 363.
Satan, 86.
Satraps, 132, 328.
Saul, King of Israel, 19.
Saulcy, De, 25.
Saviours (judges), 239.
Sayce, A. H., 3, 21, 39, 47, 70, 87 (n.), 88 (n.), 103, 233, 248, 303, 361.
Sayce-Cowley Papyri, 32 (n.), 85, 88.
Sceptre, golden, 333.
Schechter, 220.
Scheil, R. P., 363.
Schick, 173, 177.
Schlatter, 170.
Schlegel, A. W. v., 363.
Scholz, A., 295.
Schrader, 50, 81, 83, 133, 242, 360 (n.).

Schulz, 84, 119, 156, 283, 297.
Schürer, 36, 44, 250 (n.).
Schwally, 304.
Scribe, 115, 117, 314, 328.
Sealing of the Covenant, 245.
— ring, 328.
Secretary of Sanballat (Tobiah?), 206, 207.
'Seek,' two meanings of, 116, 129.
Seganim, 136, 175.
Sekhikhim, 195.
Selalim, 195.
Sellin, 21, 50, 85, 94.
Semler, 297.
Senaah, 59.
Separated themselves, those who had, 112, 246.
Sepulchre of David, 186.
Sepulchres of Nehemiah's ancestors, 66.
Servant, 171.
Servants, i. e. Nehemiah's suite, 196.
Service, 127.
Seven, a sacred number, 118.
Seven counsellors, 118, 311.
— eunuchs, 310.
— princes, 311.
Shaashgaz, 315, 320.
Shahriar, 319, 363.
Shāmar, nāṭar = to keep, 141.
Shebaniah, 263.
Shecaniah, 263.
Sheep Gate, 179, 189, 191.
Shekel, 9, 129.
Shelah, Pool of, 185.
Shelemiah, 282.
Shemaiah, 209.
Shenazzar, 47.
Sheshbazzar, Prince over Judah, 47, 55, 56, 105, 156.
— not identical with Zerubbabel, 47, 100.
Shethar-bozenai, 96.
Shew, i.e. report to, 318.
Shewbread, 248.
Shield, two words so rendered, 196.
Shiloakh, 185.
Shimshai, 85, 86, 96.
Shishak, King of Tyre, 19.
Shushan, *see under* Susa.
— fortress, or palace of, 161, 169, 307, &c.
Shushanchites, 88.
Shut up, 209.
Siegfried, 13, 48, 58, 66, 98, 105, 106, 107, 119, 133, 189, 193, 195, 206, 210, 227, 228, 230, 254, 260, 267, 272, 286, 350, 359.
Signet ring, 328.
Silence of sixty years, 113.
Siloam, Pool of, 185.
Simon made high-priest and prince, 34.
Sin offering, 110, 132, 249.
Sinai, Mt., 233.
Singers, included in Levites, 62, 78, 258.
— not included in Levites, 62, 63, 71.
Singing men and singing women, 69.
Sira, Ben, 22.
Siris, 337.
Sisinnes, 96.
Sitnah, Hebrew word = accusation, 86.
Sivan, or third month, 347.
Skinner, J., 210.
Sleeplessness of the king, 339.
Smend, Rudolph, 52, 60, 61, 133, 246, 255.
Smith, G. A., 134, 147, 170, 171, 172, 173, 173 (n.), 177, 189, 233.
— H. P., 21.
— W. Robertson, 19, 173, 210, 277, 353 (n.).
Sojourners, 229.
Solidarity of nation, 137, 143.
Solomon, 75, 92.

Solomon, height of porch in Temple of, 104.
— servants of, 64.
Son = descendant, 316.
— = grandson of, 94.
— = having the property of, 63, 82.
— = one or more of a specified class, 269.
Sources of Ezra and Nehemiah, 11.
South, Hebrew terms for, 271.
Southern Kingdom, 45.
Spears, 195.
Spencer, 67.
Spinoza, 297.
Stade, 10, 48, 68, 89, 98, 133, 173, 267, 270, 304 (n).
Staerk, 361.
Stairs (near Jerusalem), 185.
Stand, 230.
Statutes, 163.
Steuernagel, 248.
Strack, 13.
Straight way, a, 128.
Straitness (distress), 333.
Strange women, 144, 148, 149, 152, 155, 156.
Strangers = non-Jews, 229.
Streane, 323.
Stud, 348.
Stuff, household, 280.
Sumer, 42.
Sunrise and sunset in Palestine, 197.
Sure covenant, 244.
Susa, 97, 101, 120, 158, 298, 306, 307.
— fortress (palace) of, 169, 316.
Susiana, 94.
Swete, 294.
Swords, 195.
Syene, 161.
Synagogue, Great, 8, 220.
Synod of Jamnia, 3, 13.
Syria, 169.
Sythian, 39.
Tabeel, 85, 86.
Tabernacles, Feast of, 5, 7, 10, 16, 71, 73, 75, 133, 156, 158, 218, 225.
Tablets, Cuneiform, 91, 96, 102, 103, 135, 168, 300.
Talent of gold, 130.
— of silver, 120, 129, 327.
Talmud, 3, 62, 199, 213.
Taph, 144.
Tarpelites, 88.
Tattenai, 96, 97, 101, 105, 108.
Teachers, Levites as, 126.
Tebet, or tenth month, 152.
Tekoa, 181.
Tel-el-Amarna, clay tablets found at, 91, 102, 135, 168.
Temple, first (Solomon's), 75, 80; destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, 99.
— second, Cyrus authorizes rebuilding of, 46; preparations for rebuilding, 75; foundation laid, 76, 100; work hindered, 80; recommenced, 105; completed, 108; dedicated, 109.
— to be rebuilt to receive the Messiah, 94.
— chambers or cells in, 130.
— contributions towards, 118.
— doors of, 209.
— officials of, 51, 59, 152.
— outward business of, 258.
— poll-tax for upkeep of, 248.
— records of, 12, 51.
— servants of:—Nethinim, 62, 63, 64, 71, 121, 127, 190; porters, 62, 63, 71, 153, 212; singers, 62, 63, 71, 153.
— stones, great, of, 98.
Tertu, 9.
Thackeray, 29.
Thanks, to give, *see under* Confession.

Thenius, 173.
Theodotian, 28, 29.
Thermopylae and Salamis, battle of, 32.
Thompson, 294.
Thousand and One Nights, The, 363.
Thumb, 306.
Tiberius, Roman Tribune, 34.
Tiribaz, 340.
Tirshatha, 66, 70, 156, 224, 245.
Tischendorf-Nestle, 294.
Tishri (sacred month), 71, 75, 152, 218.
— first day of, 220.
Tithe, 18, 252.
Titus, arch of, at Rome, 92.
Tobiah the Ammonite, 171, 178, 206, 207.
Tolerance of early Persian kings, 15, 40, 102, 360, 362.
Toll, 90.
Torah, or Book of the Law, 8, 9, 10, 11, 115, 293.
Torrey, 5, 14, 16, 21, 22, 28, 40, 54, 62, 101, 111, 133, 177, 230, 246, 262, 275.
Tower of Furnaces, 184.
— Hammeah, 179.
— Hananel, 180.
Tradition, 27.
Transgress, trespass, 144, 146, 148, 162.
Transpotamia, commander or recorder of, 86, 96.
— governors and satraps of, 169.
— Judah a part of, 55.
— judges and magistrates in, 121.
— meaning of word, 87.
— treasury of, 119.
Treasurer, 120.
Treasury, 119.
Tribe, 52.
Tribute, 90, 92.
Trito-Isaiah, 31.
Trouble, to, 83.
Trumpets, Feast of, 71.
Trumpets blown by priests, 78.
Twelve, significance of the number, 51.
Tyropoeon Valley, 173, 185.

Ukhulgal, 235.
Umon Lakish, 261.
Unclean land, 140.
Unwalled villages, 354.
Upon, 270.
Uriah, high-priest, 181.
Urim and Thummim, 67.
Uštannai, Governor of Transpotamia, 96.
Uzahor, 15.

Valley Gate, 172, 184, 270.
Valley of Craftsmen, 262.
Vashti, 303, 310, 314.
Verb, impersonal, *see* Indefinite Subject.
— agreement of, 357.
Vernes, 23, 25.
Verse, the longest in the Hagiographa, 347.
Vessels of banquet, 309.
— Temple restored by Cyrus, 46.
Viewed, 174.
Virgins, 315.
Virgin's Spring (Gihon), 185, 189.
Vitringa, 20.

Wady-el-Wad, 173.
Wady-er-Rababi, 172, 173.
Wall, sense of Hebrew word so rendered, 96.
Walls, i. e. fences or protections, 140.
Walls of Jerusalem, eastern, 177.
— north-eastern, 178.
— south-eastern, 178.
— southern, 178.

Walls of Jerusalem, western, 178.
— completion of and time occupied therewith, 210.
— dedication of, 268.
— procession round, 269.
— repairing of, Hebrew word explained, 193.
Walton, Polyglot of, 28.
Ward, kept the, 276.
Warren, 177.
Watches, 213.
Water Gate, 188, 270.
'Waw consecutive' forms, 41, 254, 316.
Wedding feast, 321.
Weeks, Feast of, 10, 75.
Wellhausen, 9, 14, 19, 26, 40, 48, 70, 94, 96, 115, 116, 242, 250, 254, 255.
West, Hebrew terms for, 271.
Westcott, 292.
Whiston, 28.
Whitehouse, 31, 32, 165.
Wildeboer, 292, 299, 304, 325, 340, 345, 351.
Wilhelm, E., 361.
Winepress (*purah*), 304.
Wise men, 311.
Wives, read 'foreign wives,' 145.
Woman, low position of in the East, 314.
Women, separate feast for, 310.
— ate with men in Persia, 297, 310.
— strange, 144, 148, 149, 152, 155, 156.
— when first put away, 112.
Wood-offering, 250.
Worship, centralization of, 74.
Wright, F. F., 172.
Writing, modes of and materials for, 103, 168.

Xenophon, 40.
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus), extent of kingdom of, 306.
Xerxes I, letter sent to, 84.
— name in Hebrew, and so on, 307.
— consults his wise men, 311; dismisses Vashti, 313; chooses Esther, 329; agrees to Haman's proposal to slaughter the Jews, 325; withdraws the edict, 345; sentences Haman to death, 344; allows the Jews to slaughter their enemies, 348, 350.

Yahweh, the Hebrew word, how represented in English, and so on, 162.
— the national God of Israel, 120, 162.
— worship of by Samaritans, 81.
Yahwism, 68.
— favour shown to by early Persian kings, 102.
Year, first month of, 152.
— sacred and secular, 152.
Yeb, Jewish Temple of Yahu at, 15, 32, 161, 362.
— — spared by Cambyses, 102.

Zabbai, or Zaccai, 154.
Zaccur, 180.
Zadok, 282.
Zadokites, 62.
Zagmuk, Feast of, 302.
Zamzagu, 158.
Zanoah (*Zanû'a*), 261.
Zarathustra (Zoroaster), 360, 362.
Zebakh, 19.
Zeboim, 262.
Zechariah, son of Iddo, 5, 23, 94.
Zeresh, 337.
Zerubbabel, first governor of Judah, 204.
— meaning of name, 56.

Zerubbabel, not identical with Sheshbazzar, 47.
— thought to be the expected Messiah, 94.
— with Joshua built the altar, 72; laid the foundation of the Temple, 76; commenced the building of the Temple, 95.
Zimmern, 9 n., 165, 302, 303, 304.
Zöckler, 108 (n. 2).
Zoroaster (Zarathustra), 39, 360, 362.
Zoroastrian, Cyrus a, 40, 360.
Zoroastrianism (Zarathustraism), 15, 360.
Zunz, 4, 20.

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